


Impact of Aging Trends on the State Government Workforce



Prepared by
The Task Force on the Changing Age
Profile of the Washington State
Government Workforce

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Executive Summary

Forty-two percent of state and local agency employees across the country are over the age of 45, which means a significant increase in impending retirements in the relatively near future. This increase is part of a general workforce trend resulting from the aging of the “baby boom” generation—the largest generation in the workforce.

This aging trend is even more pronounced for public sector employees than it is for the general workforce. In Washington State, more than 50 percent of state workers are 45 or older, compared to 35 percent of the state’s general workforce. State government must, therefore, be on the forefront of planning and preparing for the impact of this aging trend.

The Department of Personnel convened a task force to examine the trends and issues relating to the aging of the workforce, determine how these trends will impact state government as an employer, and recommend steps the state and individual agencies need to be taking to plan and prepare for future workforce needs. The task force was made up of representatives from a variety of state agencies. They conducted extensive research on the Internet, in published documents, and through contacts with various public and private sector organizations. The following is a summary of the task force findings and recommendations.

Findings

- More than 50% of state employees are 45 or older, and 15% are 55 or over. By comparison, only 35% of the state’s general workforce is over 45.
- The state will experience significantly higher turnover due to increasing retirement rates, with some agencies and job categories impacted to a much greater extent than others.
- In 18 agencies, including some of the state’s largest, 15-29% of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Plan 1 workforce will be eligible to retire in the next five years.
- More than 50% of executive level and 30% of mid-level managers will be eligible to retire by 2005.
- Agencies will be challenged to replace highly skilled and experienced employees, especially in occupations and locations where the labor market is particularly competitive.
- Over 50% of the state workforce is in the 40-54 age group and at the mid-career stage or more. These employees are competing for a limited number of higher level positions or may have reached the top of their career potential. Consequently, creative ways are needed to recognize achievement and provide continued challenge and growth.
- Older workers often have different needs and interests, which may call for changes in employee benefits, health and safety considerations, and more flexible work arrangements.
- The requirement for PERS 2 & 3 members to work until age 65 to receive full benefits could make the retirement plan less of an incentive in recruiting or retaining the most qualified and sought-after employees.

- Post-retirement work restrictions may limit agencies' ability to access the highly qualified retiree talent pool.
- New technology and ways of doing business are quickly changing many aspects of the workplace. Workers of all ages need adequate training and support so that they can keep pace with these changes and maintain productivity and job satisfaction.

Recommendations

- Conduct workforce analysis and planning to anticipate and prepare for increased turnover and other potential impacts of the aging of the workforce. Simply put, workforce planning is "getting the right number of people with the right skills and competencies in the right jobs at the right time."
- Use succession planning as a way to prepare a pool of qualified candidates to meet future workforce needs and to provide an avenue for long term employees to pass on accumulated knowledge, experience, and historical perspective.
- Streamline recruitment and compensation processes to facilitate replacing or retaining employees. The Department of Personnel (DOP) continues to make process improvements within existing laws, but revisions to the civil service statutes are needed to remove systemic barriers.
- Expand and enhance pro-active outreach recruitment efforts in order to be more competitive in an increasingly tight labor market.
- Explore options to help retain experienced workers, such as scheduling flexibility, telecommuting, assignment or career changes, leave options, and downshifting.
- Hire retirees as a source of experienced workers. DOP is currently developing a pool of retirees interested in state positions.
- Eliminate barriers to using retirees as part-time workers by reducing restrictions on post-retirement employment and/or allowing exceptions so that agencies can provide health care coverage as an incentive for retirees to work part-time.
- Ensure that work facilities, equipment, and processes are safe and ergonomically sound, and that the work environment is equally supportive of employees of all ages.

Tools and Resources

Presently Available

Workforce Planning:

- Department of Personnel's Workforce Planning website (<http://www.wa.gov/dop/workforceplanning>)
- Resource Directory: Literature references and website links on workforce planning and related subjects
- Workforce data (statewide and by agency) is available through the Department of Personnel's Human Resource Data Warehouse including, but not limited to:
 - ▶ Workforce composition by job classification and salary
 - ▶ Turnover rates
 - ▶ Retirement eligibility and projections
 - ▶ Workforce demographics: age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, geographic location, length of service

Succession Planning:

- Tools to prepare for high turnover in management positions:
 - ▶ Profile of suggested management competencies
 - ▶ 360° skill assessment instrument (META 360°)
 - ▶ Management development courses/workshops (entry through advanced)
 - ▶ HELP Academy

Employee Redeployment and Development Assistance:

- Career transition and advancement assistance and workshops
- Customized training and development courses/workshops
- Organizational development and facilitation assistance

Job Recruitment And Outreach Assistance:

- Customized recruitment and selection approaches
- College Recruitment Program
- In-training options
- Governor's Internship Program
- Washington Management Service

Employee Productivity & Retention Tools:

- Workplace climate assessment (State Employee Survey)
- Monetary and non-monetary recognition options
- Flexible, alternative work arrangements, such as flex-time and telecommuting
- Incentives for voluntary separation or downshifting
- Part-time, job sharing, intermittent employment
- Leave options, including eldercare leave, dependent care leave, temporary leave-without-pay, shared leave

Under Development

(Available by Fall 2000)

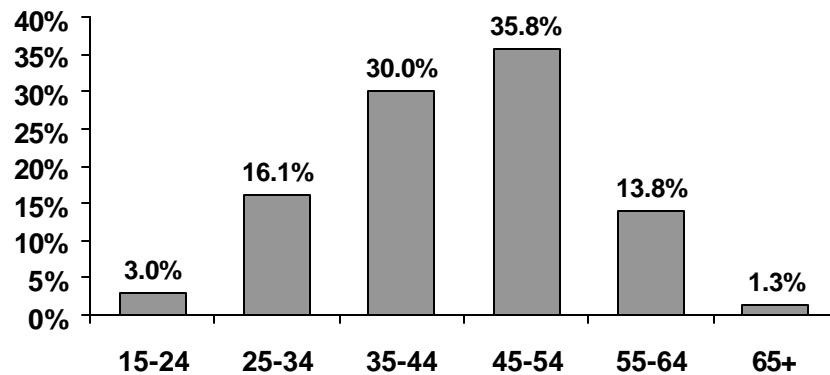
- Complete Workforce Planning website
- Comprehensive workforce planning guidelines, model, and tool kit. Includes emphasis on linking workforce needs to agency strategic plans.
- Workforce competency assessment models
- Succession planning guidelines and models
- Training needs assessment tool
- Profiles of suggested competencies for selected generic occupational categories
- Workforce Planning Consultation Team (central source of assistance at DOP)
- Retiree Candidate Pool

Introduction

There are about 78 million baby boomers in the U.S. and someone in America turns 50 approximately every seven seconds. As the baby boomers are maturing, so is the American workforce. By the year 2005, people aged 55 and over are projected to be nearly 20 percent of the working age population, compared to 12.5 percent in 1990.

In Washington State, the aging trend is even more pronounced for state employees than it is for the general workforce. In the state's general workforce, approximately 35 percent of employees are 45 or older. Within the state government workforce, more than 50 percent are 45 or older. And 15 percent of state employees are aged 55 or over. Table 1 shows the makeup of the state government workforce by age category.

Table 1
State Government Workforce by Age Category



How does this maturing of the workforce impact state government as an employer? And what steps should the state and individual agencies be taking to plan and prepare for future workforce needs?

The Department of Personnel convened a task force in late 1998 to examine the trends and related issues and to identify potential impacts, strategies, barriers, and resources for consideration by state government and by individual agencies. Specific goals of the task force included:

- Obtain accurate information on the age distribution and potential retirements existing within Washington's state government workforce.
- Identify possible problem areas or opportunities the state may encounter.
- Identify specific classes of workers that may be affected by retirements.
- Identify policy areas that are relevant to the issue.
- Utilize the experience of other states and other employers through researching their strategies.

- Identify strategies being employed by some Washington state agencies that could be used as models or learning tools by other agencies.
- Provide information and recommendations that agencies can use in their own workforce planning efforts.

Task Team Approach

The task force was made up of people from a variety of agencies and state organizations. The group represented a variety of perspectives, interests, and expertise, including human resources, research, management, retirement systems, institutions, and aging/adult services.

Throughout 1999, task force members conducted research through the Internet, print publications, and by contacting other states and some private companies to find out what approaches had proven useful for them. State agencies with particular issues or strategies related to the aging workforce provided summaries of their concerns or activities.

The Department of Personnel (DOP) Data Warehouse was the primary source for statistics and information about the state's current workforce. Current data from institutions of higher education are only available in each institution and reside on multiple databases in varying formats. The task force, therefore, concentrated on general state government and did not include higher education statistics. Information also came from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), the Employment Security Department (ESD), the Office of the State Actuary (OSA), and the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

Task Group Composition:

Christina Valadez, Department of Personnel
 Fred Hellberg, Governor's Executive Policy Office
 Karen Durant, The Evergreen State College, formerly with Department of Retirement Systems
 Joy St. Germain, Department of Ecology
 Adrienne Sanders, Department of Transportation
 Shelagh Taylor, Labor and Industries
 Kim Kelley, Aging and Adult Services, Department of Social and Health Services
 Thomas Quinn, Department of Social and Health Services
 Shalice Ando, Department of Information Services
 Meredith Huff, Department of Personnel
 Joanel Huart, Department of Personnel
 Steve Nelson, Department of Retirement Systems
 Curt Gavigan, Department of Personnel
 Dick Armstrong, Employment Security Department

Other supporting or interested organizations:

Washington Federation of State Employees
 The University of Washington

Section I: Findings

A. Overview of National Demographic and Workplace Issues

A review of numerous publications and web-sites regarding the impact of aging revealed several trends and issues affecting both private and public employees as well as society in general. Themes common to many were an increasingly older population, changes in workplace environment and employee needs, and changes in workforce composition. The major issues affecting many workplaces across the nation are summarized below.

Aging Population

“The first wave of babies born between 1946 and 1964 are now entering their early 50s. Many of them occupy positions of great responsibility or have years of experience within their employing organizations. As the largest generation in the workforce, their gradual shift to the senior end of the spectrum will have a significant affect on the American workforce in the years to come.”¹

Population aging will affect not only labor and financial markets, but also national savings rates; housing; the political scene; and the finances of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. In 1990, there was one older person for every five working age people. By 2035, calculations indicate that the forecasted ratio will nearly double. This means that instead of five workers supporting each retiree, there will be only two and a half workers to support each person collecting Social Security benefits. While the size of the older population is critical to policy-making, other characteristics such as labor-force participation, health status, and family issues are essential to have a complete picture of the effects of these demographic shifts.²

Turnover

As the workforce ages, more and more baby-boomers will become eligible to retire, creating a competition for the experience and skill of mature workers. Human Resource professionals and analysts anticipate a wave of retirement in the next decade, and turnover is expected to accelerate. Employers are concerned about the great numbers of retirees that will be leaving and the experience they will take with them.³

Minnesota has already experienced this, and has had a problem replacing those who retire; the result has been an extremely low unemployment rate, but because they cannot replace the retirees adequately, economic growth has been slowed.⁴ Minnesota is experiencing these problems now, but this trend is expected to occur nationwide.

¹ Gov Exec.Com A Service of Government Executive Magazine, *Graying Government*, January, 1998

² DeVita, Carol. Forecast the Aging of Your Workforce.
<http://www.workforceonline.com/boomers/30749.html>*

³ Ibid

⁴ Tom Gillaspay, Minnesota Planning Agency, Labor Shortage? 5/26/98

*Note: When going back to review website sources, we often found they were no longer available, or that the original information had been replaced with new articles. The citations in the footnotes of this report are the sites we accessed during the research phase and may or may not still be available.

It will be important to develop recruitment plans to bring new workers into the workforce, or to bring back those who have left. Retention of currently employed mature workers will also be key in avoiding a loss of skill and experience that could be detrimental to an organization. Finally, succession planning is a valuable tool to help employers ensure that the vital functions performed by the organization will continue in the future.

Workforce Participation Trends

Among mature workers employed full-time, there is often a desire to downshift for a variety of reasons. They may want to ease into retirement, deal with less stress, want a change, have more freedom, or they may be dealing with health or family issues. The downshifting may be characterized by changing occupations or by reducing the number of work hours. A number of companies, particularly those with an older workforce, are implementing phased retirement programs to meet the needs of their workers and to retain key talent in an era of increasing labor shortages. (For additional information, see the Watson Wyatt 1999 survey referenced in the resources section.)

Seventy percent of the nation's 78 million baby boomers plan to continue working part-time after retirement, but 36 percent have jobs that do not give them personal satisfaction.

There are a number of reasons why mature workers may choose to continue working, including financial need, longer life expectancy, and a desire to continue working. It is no longer unusual for individuals to retire from one job, begin drawing a pension, and seek new employment. Since 1984, full- and part-time work of men older than age 65 has increased significantly.⁵ This creates great potential for employers seeking experienced workers.

Family Care Issues

One in four U.S. households cares for a mature family member, and 64 percent of caregivers are employed. Productivity lost to care-giving costs U.S. businesses an estimated \$29 billion a year. Since 1990, the number of work-life programs offering an eldercare component have tripled. Currently, over one-quarter of the top 1,000 corporations offer such programs.⁶

Taking care of elderly family members involves a significant time commitment. Flexibility in the schedule of mature workers is an important issue, as many mature employees feel a great amount of stress created by conflicts between their work schedule or job demands and family obligations.

Researchers are working to develop models to forecast the health and disability status of the older population. Others are estimating the kinship networks of future senior citizens. Because the baby-boomers have experienced more divorce, remarriage, and childlessness than their parents' generation, family networks look very different from those of the past. An unanswered question is whether or not the increasing number of step-kin relationships will fill the same role as today's biological kin in providing support and assistance for baby boomers in their old age.⁷ The answers to these questions may significantly impact the workforce in the coming years.

⁵ Imel, Susan Older Workers 1996 <http://www.ericave.org/docs/olderw.htm>

⁶ A Middle-Aging Workforce the Facts The Human Resources Council
www.asaging.org/networks/bfa/bfabro.html.html

⁷ DeVita, Carol, op. cit.

Workplace Safety and Health

Employers face the challenge of meeting the needs of an aging workforce and the effect it has on workplace safety and workers' compensation costs. It is expected that due to the declining birth rate that followed the baby boom, there will be a reduction in the size of the skilled labor pool. This will undoubtedly put more emphasis on the mature worker in the workforce. Injuries on the job and the resultant workers' compensation claims may increase as the workforce gets older. Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries' data indicates that the national rate of the most severe injuries—fatalities—appears to increase with age: 7 fatalities for every 100,000 workers between 55 and 64 years old and 13 for every 100,000 workers over age 65. This compares with just 5 for every 100,000 workers age 25 to 54 years. However, it is difficult to conclude, just by looking at these numbers, whether age was the main factor or if distribution of age groups within certain occupations or other factors was the primary cause of these fatality rates.

Accidents and fatalities aren't the only health issues on the job for mature workers. There are often challenges in facing the everyday physical demands of the job as well. Manual or physical labor can become more difficult, and even office work can be hard on a person's eyes, back, and wrists. As people age, these health issues become more apparent.

Workplace Stereotypes/Biases

Several studies have shown that when compared to younger workers, mature workers are viewed positively on a number of job traits—including low absenteeism, low turnover, positive work attitudes and motivation, job skills, and loyalty. From the opposite view, a serious barrier and deterrent in the workplace is managerial biases that mature workers are too costly and less flexible in accepting new assignments and new technology, and in learning new skills.⁸ Although they are thought to be steady and dependable, some also see mature workers as slow, unwilling to change, and less likely to become team players.

Ageism denies mature workers equal opportunity and equitable treatment, and is a critical workplace issue where it exists. Another serious issue for mature workers in some workplaces is lack of access to training that would help them to maintain productivity and value. To overcome these biases, the aging work force should be viewed from both an organizational perspective and from an individual perspective.⁹

Employers must find ways to recognize, value, and utilize the current skills of mature workers effectively. The biases and age discrimination that some mature workers have faced must be dealt with, and current stereotypes about mature workers should be put to rest.¹⁰

Workplace Changes

The need to learn new skills as the workplace changes is a challenge faced by all employees. New technology and ways of doing business are quickly changing many aspects of the workplace today, which makes adaptation to these changes necessary. Employees with different lengths and types of work experiences may view these situations differently.

⁸ Imel, Susan, op. cit.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ CYFC Aging Workforce Issues <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/documents/H/B/HB1003.html>

Helping mature workers deal effectively with technological change is a key challenge facing employers in order to achieve gains for the workers and the organization itself. Although technology is very important and often talked about, training and re-training in all areas concerning the jobs and situations of mature workers cannot be overlooked.¹¹ Training in teamwork, change management, communication, diversity, and other issues are equally important to ensuring all employees have the skills needed in today's changing environment.

¹¹ CYFC, op. cit.

B. Workforce Retirement Trends in Washington State

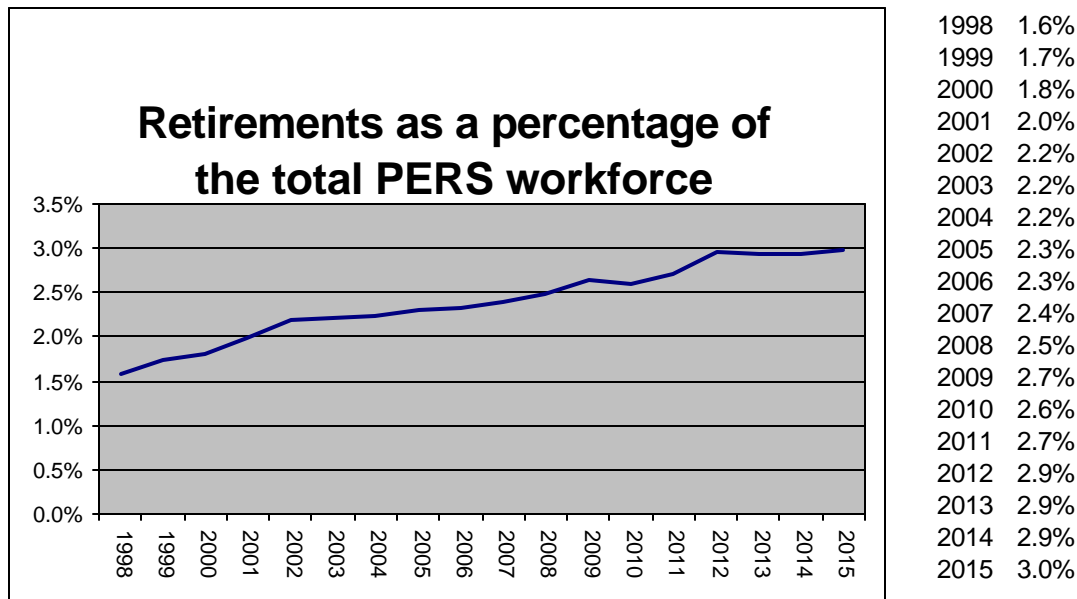
One of the questions that the task force addressed was whether there would be a significant increase in retirements which could affect agencies' ability to administer programs and services. The following are some of the key findings:

- The overall annual retirement rate will nearly double by 2015, increasing from the current level of 1.7 percent to 3 percent of the workforce.
- The overall projections indicate a gradual increase in the numbers and percentages of retirements over the next few years, rather than a big surge.
- Some agencies and occupations are likely to experience significantly higher rates of turnover due to retirement.

General Government Retirement

The turnover rate in the entire Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) due to retirement has been gradually increasing for some time and is projected to continue to increase for the next 20 years. Table 2 below shows the projected retirement rates for all PERS members through 2015. (Although these numbers include general government, higher education, and local government, the percentages are presumed to apply fairly closely to all system segments.)

Table 2



Differences in Retirement Plans

The Public Employees Retirement System has two plans. PERS Plan 1 covers all persons who first became members of the system prior to October 1, 1977. PERS Plan 2 covers all persons who first became members of the system on or after October 1, 1977.

There are a number of significant differences between Plan 1 and Plan 2, including: the normal retirement age; required member contributions; a cap on service credit; and cost-of-living adjustments. These differences affect the age at which employees are likely to retire, and are, therefore, important considerations in predicting the potential impacts of retirement on specific agencies and occupational areas.

The normal retirement age for PERS Plan 1 is 60. However, a member can retire at age 55 if they have 25 years of service and they can retire at any age if they have 30 years of service. The normal retirement age for PERS Plan 2 is 65 regardless of how much service the person has. A PERS Plan 2 member can qualify for a reduced early retirement if they are age 55 and have 20 years of service, but few members choose to exercise this option because of the reduction.

In 1999, the average age of PERS 1 employees was just under 52; most are eligible to retire by age 55. The average age of PERS 2 employees is just under 43.

According to Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) data, most employees in PERS 1 do retire within three years after becoming eligible. Table 3 shows varying probabilities of retiring depending on an employee's age and retirement plan.

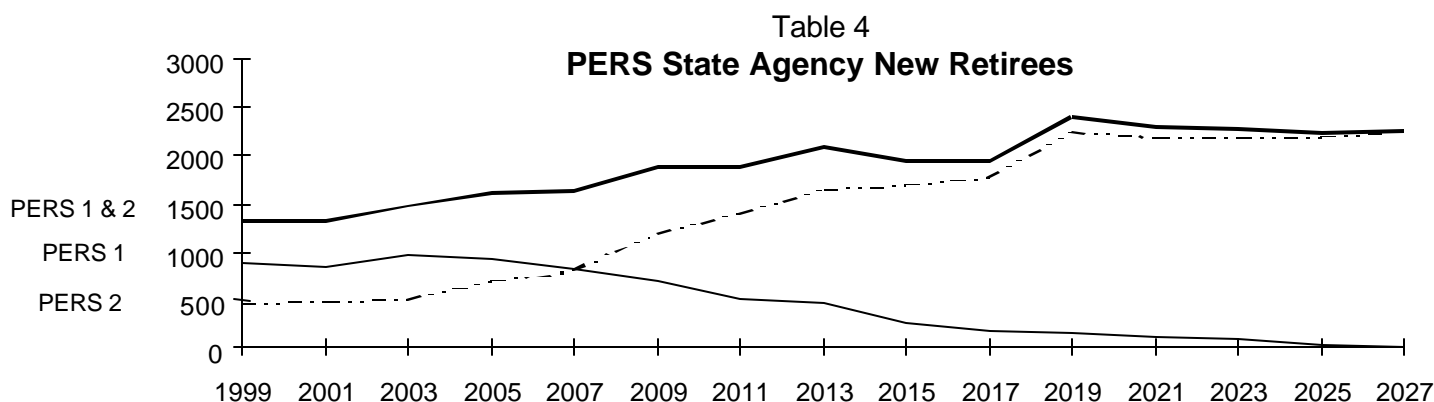
Table 3

Probabilities of Service Retirement Among Members Eligible to Retire					
	PERS PLAN 1			PERS PLAN 2	
Age	Male	Female	Age	Male	Female
51	60%	32%			
52-53	48	32			
54	48	43			
55	33	33			
56	25	28	55-56	2%	5%
57-58	25	28	57-58	3	6
59	39	60	59	3	8
60	19	25	60	4	10
61	26	19	61	6	10
62	45	35	62	46	62
63	31	23	63	30	26
64	38	33	64	40	40
65	55	51	65	64	64
66-69	33	31	66-69	50	40
70	100	100	70	100	100

Source: 1998 DRS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Plan 1 employees currently account for 17.4% of the total PERS workforce. This percentage decreases every year as PERS 1 employees retire or separate from employment for other reasons. They are projected to account for 2.3% of the total PERS workforce in 2009.

PERS 1 employees currently make up the majority of PERS retirees. PERS 2 began October 1, 1977, so only recently have members begun to reach the 20 years of service necessary to qualify for early retirement. Table 4 shows the projected number of PERS retirees from state agencies through 2027. The number of PERS 1 retirees is expected to remain relatively level until 2007 and is expected to exceed the number of PERS 2 retirees until 2007. The number of combined PERS retirements is projected to increase gradually until 2019 at which point virtually all retirees will be from PERS 2.



Agencies with Higher Than Average Retirement Potential

To determine which areas of state government could be most affected by increased retirement rates, information regarding numbers of PERS 1 and PERS 2 employees meeting retirement eligibility criteria was retrieved from the Department of Personnel's Data Warehouse. The data was grouped by agency and by job class. An analysis of the data showed that some agencies have high numbers of PERS 1 employees eligible to retire between 1999 and 2005. The data and resulting conversions below are based on a snapshot report from late 1998 which included those eligible to retire based on age and length of service between 1999 and 2005.

Based on this information, four agencies are likely to experience significantly higher than average retirement rates between now and 2005 based on high percentages of retirement eligible PERS 1 employees in their agencies: Employment Security (27 percent), the Department of Personnel (24 percent), the State Treasurer (29 percent), and the Department of Printing (26 percent). As a comparison, the overall state average retirement rate expected during this period is just over 12 percent.

Several other agencies are likely to experience a rate of retirement somewhat higher than the average (also based on PERS 1 eligibility except for the Washington State Patrol, which is based on Washington State Patrol retirement system information). The following agencies could potentially see an increased retirement rate among their workforce between now and 2005. (They had from 15 to 22 percent of their workforce in PERS 1 and reaching eligibility between 1999 and 2005, according to the same Data Warehouse report.)

Office of Administrative Hearings Office of Financial Management Department of Fish and Wildlife Department of Labor and Industries Washington State Library Department of Licensing Department of National Resources	Superintendent of Public Instruction Department of Revenue Services for the Blind Department of Social and Health Services Department of Transportation Utilities and Transportation Commission Washington State Patrol
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NOTE: Agencies, boards, or commissions with fewer than 50 employees were not included in this analysis. Turnover rates by agency can be found in the Data Warehouse On-line Statistics through the state's intranet at <http://dop16wbp/dw97/dwindex.htm>

Potentially High Retirement Occupational Categories

A review of retirement eligibility rates by job class indicated that there are some occupational categories that may be affected more than others. This is a contributing factor to the higher rates for some agencies. For example, several of Employment Security's unique job classes have high retirement eligibility rates. However, even agencies likely to experience an average rate of retirement may experience higher than average rates for certain occupational categories. The occupations identified are based on information from the Data Warehouse indicating numbers of PERS 1 employees meeting eligibility criteria between 1999 and 2005 by job class. These numbers were compared to the overall number of employees in the job class at the time of the report. Extremely small job classes were not included.

Based on anticipated retirement rates, an average 12-13 percent turnover due to retirement is expected between 1999 and 2005. The following job classes or categories could experience significantly higher retirement rates between now and 2005, based on the fact that they have 21 percent or more of incumbents who are in PERS 1 and will meet eligibility criteria within this period:

Agency Directors	Safety & Health Specialists
Employment Security unique job classes	Safety Officers
Fiscal classes	Security Analysts
Fish & Wildlife Officers, Sergeants & Detectives	Senior Computer Specialists
Foresters	Senior Financial Services Specialists
Insurance Underwriters	Senior Human Resource Professionals
Investigators	Senior Natural Resource Managers
Library Technicians	Senior Park Rangers
Meteorologists	Senior Social Workers
Press Operators	Senior Transportation Planning Specialists
	WMS employees

Job classes or categories with 15-20% of incumbents in PERS 1 that will be eligible for retirement between 1999 and 2005 could experience somewhat higher than average retirement rates during this time period. They include:

Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officers	Microbiologists
DSHS Mid-Managers	MWBE Program Specialists
Engineers	Physicians
Environmental Planners	Retirement Services Analysts
Experienced Cooks and Food Managers	Right of Way Agents
Fish & Wildlife Biologist	Senior researchers
Lead and Supervisory RNs	Senior Worker's Compensation Adjudicators
L&I Mid-Managers	Several unique Ferry Systems classes
Lottery District Sales Representatives	Trades and maintenance supervisors

Potential Replacement Problems

The average statewide turnover is approximately 10 percent per year. This too can vary significantly within specific agencies, job classes, or geographic locations. If higher than average turnover coincides with higher than average retirement rates, then some areas could be harder hit than anticipated. Individual agency analysis on turnover and anticipated retirement should provide good indicators of potential problems.

The state is currently experiencing recruitment problems with trades classes in the Seattle area and is beginning to see recruitment difficulties system-wide with fiscal classes. We have for some time had difficulty recruiting in the medical field, and for experienced computer specialists. Some of the job classes listed above are primarily within institutions or are associated with high turnover due to stressful working conditions, and therefore have unique recruitment issues.

The Employment Security Department projects a lower supply than demand in upcoming years for Fiscal Program Managers, experienced Library Technicians, Employment Interviewers, Institutional Cooks, and some types of computer specialists. This could also affect the state's ability to replace retiring workers.

Possible Increase in PERS 2 Retirements

As people in PERS Plan 2 age and attain increasing years of service, we may see more and more employees with 25-30 years of service who are not yet eligible for full retirement. If these employees choose to seek careers elsewhere rather than work an extended number of years to receive full benefits, there could be an increase in turnover.

If these employees choose to stay in the system rather than seek careers elsewhere, the state is likely to experience increased pressure to enable retirement with full benefits before age 65. Recently passed legislation reduces the early retirement penalty for Plan 2 members who have 30 years of service, but does not eliminate it. PERS Plan 2 will have been in effect for 30 years in October 2007. At that time, there may be an increase in the retirement rate for Plan 2 members who choose to take advantage of the reduced early retirement penalty. New PERS 3 options may also affect future retirement rates.

C. Forecast of Statewide Labor Force Changes

The following sections on changing labor force participation rates and the changing age profile of the labor force are excerpted from a 1999 report published by the Office of Financial Management and the Employment Security Department.¹²

Changes in Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation rates in Washington State historically have been higher than the national average, due in large part to a higher concentration of young people who are active labor force participants. From 1970 to 1995, the state's aggregate labor force participation rate increased from 61.5 percent to 70.1 percent. By 2020, the labor force participation rate in the state is projected to decline to 68.1 percent. Most of the drop will take place in the last decade of the forecast period.

The projected decline in labor force participation is due mainly to changes in age composition of the future population. There has been an increasing number of people over 65 moving to Washington. Seniors coming into the state affect the state labor market differently than job-related new arrivals. On the one hand they are not competing for job opportunities; on the other hand, their assets and incomes contribute to the local economy and the demand for labor. Nationwide, the proportion of the population that is retired or over age 65 is expected to increase significantly throughout the forecast period, suggesting that a growing portion of new arrivals to Washington State will be retired or over age 65.

For both males and females, labor force participation is very low for persons age 65 and over. Population growth that occurs in age groups with low labor force participation will not increase the labor force as much as the growth in the high-participation age groups (e.g., age 35 to 44). The changing age structure over time is a major factor leading to the lowering of aggregate labor force participation rate between 2010 and 2020.

From 2010 to 2020, the proportion of the state population in the older age groups will increase substantially. The share of the total state population that is age 65+ will increase from 12.2 percent in 2010 to 16.2 percent in 2020. This has a dampening effect on labor force growth since this age group has a much lower labor force participation rate. If the year 2020 population is assumed to have the same age structure as in 2010, the aggregate labor force participation rate for that year would be 71.0 percent, rather than the projected 68.1 percent. In other words, aging of the population alone will depress the state labor force participation rate by about 3 percentage points.

¹² State of Washington, "1999 Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington", prepared by the Office of Financial Management and Employment Security Department, 1999

Table 5 shows a comparison of the 1990 Washington labor force and labor force participation rates by age with the corresponding forecast for 2020.

Table 5
Washington Labor Force by Age, 1990 and 2020

Age	Total Labor Force		1990-2020		Labor force Participation Rate		
	1990	2020	Net Additions	Percent Change	1990	2020	Percentage Difference
16-24	420,823	577,931	157,108	37.3%	71.8%	70.5%	-1.2%
25-54	1,845,215	2,545,210	699,995	37.9%	86.8%	90.9%	4.1%
55-64	213,951	645,135	431,184	201.5%	56.4%	65.8%	9.4%
65+	57,465	158,445	100,980	175.7%	10.6%	13.6%	3.0%
Total	2,537,454	3,926,721	1,389,267	54.8%	69.8%	68.1%	-1.7%

Table 6 shows that educational achievement is a very significant factor in determining the working status of the 65-69 age group. Since people in the 35 to 39 age group in 1990 are three decades removed from the 65 to 69 age group in 2020, their educational profile provides a close approximation to the educational achievement of those 65 to 69 in 2020. In the future, people in this age group will have much higher educational levels than those in the same age group in 1990, suggesting a potentially higher labor force participation rate.

Table 6
Mature Labor Force Participation and Education: Washington 1990

Schooling Completed	Labor Force Participation %	Share of Age 65-69 Population	Share of Age 35-39 Population
1-9 grades	11.1%	11.9%	3.1%
10-12 grades	14.0%	13.4%	5.1%
High school graduate	16.4%	34.2%	23.7%
Some college or associate degree	22.5%	24.7%	39.6%
BA and higher	27.4%	15.7%	28.5%
Total	18.7%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 1990 Census PUMS data file.

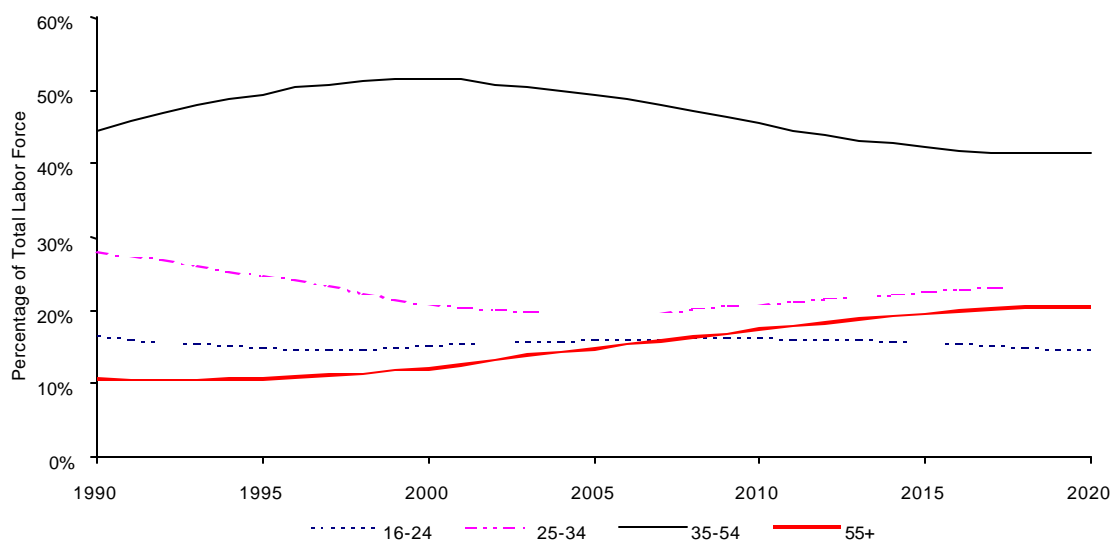
Higher educational levels make it easier for older persons to stay in the labor force. Well-educated persons are more likely to qualify for white-collar jobs that have less demand for physical strength, better compensation, and more flexible work schedules. At the same time, business cycles also exert significant influence on labor force participation behavior. The downsizing and cost-cutting operations in many large corporations in the early 1990s caused some people to drop out of the labor market entirely, and discouraged others from entering the labor market.

Aging of Labor Force

Between 1990 and 2020, the number of Washington workers over 55 years old will increase by about 196 percent, while those aged 16 to 54 will increase by only 38 percent. Consequently, the age profile of the state labor force in 2020 will be very different from that in 1990 (Table 7). Older persons (55 years old and over) in the labor force are projected to represent about 20.5 percent of all workers in 2020, almost doubling the 10.7 percent share in 1990.

As part of the aging process, the workforce will go through an interim “middle-aging” phase. Around the year 2000, middle-aged workers—those 35 to 54 years old—will constitute over one half of the labor force. A by-product of the middle-aging of the labor force is generational crowding or “mid-career crunch.” The sharp rise of workers in the 35 to 54 age cohort will lead to an abundant supply of qualified persons for mid-career promotional opportunities. And, in the later periods of the forecast horizon, continued staying of top-level, older workers may cause resentment of middle-age employees looking for career advancements. One likely result may be increasing job or career changes in the future years.

Table 7
Age Profile of Washington Labor Force



The repercussions of the “middle-aging” phenomenon may be further exacerbated by the prevailing practices of “delaying” management structure, and aggressive cost cutting in corporate America, as many large firms seek to become more competitive in the global economy. This is similar to what happened in the first half of the 1990s, when the flattening or compressing of management structures eliminated large numbers of mid-management positions. Many of these dislocated managers were unable to find employment with compensation comparable to their previous jobs.

The mature workforce is also characterized by a high proportion of part-time and temporary working arrangements. Today, a significant proportion of workers 65 and over have part-time jobs, and few of them want to switch to full-time employment. Also, a majority of the mature workers perceive their current position as temporary, indicating their readiness to change jobs or exit the labor market (for retirement).

The aging of the workforce will present unique challenges to employers. Businesses will need management and personnel practices that can effectively accommodate older employees. Among the challenges will be: (a) establishing new reward and incentive structures as traditional hierarchical promotional opportunities decline; (b) facilitating career or job changes for “squeezed” middle-age or “topped-out” older employees; (c) planning and implementing human resource management to accommodate less predictable retirement age and exits/re-entries of elderly workers; (d) meeting varied demands for employee benefits, e.g., the mature workers’ preference for long-term care insurance; (e) dealing with increased pressures on retirement systems; and (f) making work more versatile and challenging.

D. General Strategies for the Workplace

As the task team reviewed the numerous materials identified by team members, suggestions for addressing some of the new challenges were also prevalent. A summary of common elements is provided below.

This section is meant to give an overview of ideas and approaches found in the literature and on the internet, and provide help to those thinking about ways to deal with the many issues pertaining to the aging workforce. The ideas presented here deal with issues such as workforce analysis and planning; how to recruit, train, and keep employees; and how to address biases and workplace safety issues.

More specific steps and programs already in place are described in the sections on strategies in use by some state agencies, other states, and selected private companies. Recommendations for further actions specific to the Washington State government workforce can be found in Section II of this report.

Workforce Planning Strategies

Rapidly changing demographics and work demands make workforce planning more critical than ever.

- **Review workforce demographics.** Many organizations are experiencing a “graying” of the workforce. Organizations that have an older than average workforce may face workforce issues that differ from other organizations.
- **Review turnover statistics and retirement projections.** As the workforce ages, these statistics may be significantly different from past patterns. Knowing what to anticipate can help provide a foundation for meeting tomorrow’s challenges more easily.
- **Develop programs and strategies to meet current and future needs.** New trends and issues may require alternate approaches to retain and recruit a productive workforce.

Retention Strategies

As organizations experience higher levels of retirement, especially in times of low unemployment and a competitive recruitment environment, strategies for retaining experienced employees become more important.

- **Understand why people retire.** Most people don’t retire because they want to stop working, but because they want more control over their time. Health issues and family obligations are also reasons why many people retire. Employers may be able to retain some of their mature worker’s talent with flexible working arrangements or post-retirement consulting contracts.¹³

¹³ CYFC, op. cit.

- **Understand why people remain in the workforce.** Although some mature workers continue to work because they have to for financial reasons, many actually have a desire to remain in the workforce. Often, people realize that they may have thirty years in front of them and retirement, cruises, and golfing don't offer enough challenges for them. For many people, working, though not necessarily full time, keeps them sharp, focused, and gives them motivation to continue to reach for their goals.
- **Provide for flexible work arrangements.** Many mature workers see scheduling options as alternatives to full retirement and may continue working longer if these options are available.¹⁴ These options may include flexible scheduling, job sharing, part-time assignments, or temporary assignments.
- **Consider downshifting options.** Some options that fall under downshifting include voluntary moves from full to part-time work, voluntary leave without pay, movement to a different job, and temporary separation for development purposes. Downshifting may be a valuable way to offer mature workers flexibility, as well as to benefit the organization. Some aspects of downshifting offer flexibility that mature workers and those facing eldercare issues may embrace.

Health, Safety and Ergonomic Strategies¹⁵

The following are some ways employers can be proactive in addressing health and safety issues for workers of all ages:

- **Design and implement health insurance programs and medical benefits to meet the needs of workers of all ages.** Having options to meet needs that change over time assists employers to encourage the mature worker to stay with the organization, and also supports the well being of employees.
- **Provide ergonomic adjustments as necessary.** For example, evaluate workplace lighting to ensure it is adequate and does not produce glare. Set computer screens lower to accommodate those with bifocals. Provide low-cost, single-focal length computer glasses for employees whenever needed to reduce eye strain and increase production. Buy chairs, wrist rests and other ergonomically designed office equipment to help workers be more comfortable.
- **Design jobs to try to avoid continual repetitive duties;** cross-train and rotate employees in repetitive motion jobs. Allow for and encourage regular stretch breaks to help workers alter their posture and position.

Work Environment Strategies

The stereotype of the mature worker who is perceived as unwilling to change, to learn new skills, and to be competitive is being overturned by recent research. Mature workers consistently

¹⁴ CYFC, op. cit.

¹⁵ *The Graying of the Baby-boomers: Facing up to an Aging Workforce*. May, 1995. SAIF Corporation (Oregon).http://www.saif.com/safety_artc/aging.htm.

receive high ratings on key job skills, loyalty, reliability and lack of turnover and absenteeism, according to a five-year study by the Commonwealth Fund of New York.

- **Assess work environment and culture.** Both attitudinal and statistical analysis can help provide an understanding of how mature workers are perceived and treated.
- **Take steps to prevent and eliminate biases.** Training, changes in policies or procedures, or new approaches to staffing and development may be necessary.

Recruitment Strategies ¹⁶

Mature workers and retirees can be an excellent candidate pool to help agencies meet staffing needs.

- **“Target the recruitment audience.** Contact community agencies that focus on older adults. Target neighborhoods with pockets of older people and make presentations to senior groups.”¹⁷
- **Rethink the interview process.** Many interviews include questions about career goals. An alternate focus is to ask mature workers how they can share their skills and experiences with others.

Training Strategies

Experienced employees can be an excellent resource for training new employees. When an organization needs new skills, re-training mature workers increases organizational capacity to carry out program objectives, improves production of mature workers, and shows employees that the organization is investing in their individual development.

- **Establish a mentor system.** Taking advantage of the experience of mature workers through mentoring programs with younger workers, trainees, or on projects can build confidence and relationships within the office and increase overall productivity and effectiveness. Mentoring can be a morale boost for the “coach”, and provides a valuable resource and learning opportunity for less experienced workers. These programs can help to lessen some of the biases and myths surrounding mature workers by promoting interaction between age groups.¹⁸ Mentoring programs can also be used to help mature workers new to an organization who may feel awkward about joining a younger workforce due to existing age gaps and fear of bias. Assign a mentor during the orientation to introduce the new employee and show him/her how things are done. Interaction between workers of different ages can ease the awkwardness and help everyone realize that mature workers have much to offer. The morale of mature workers can also be boosted by the organization illustrating that they are valued.¹⁹

¹⁶ The Motivational Manager, February 1998.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ CYFC op. cit.

¹⁹ The Motivational Manager, op. cit.

- **Actively involve the mature worker in the learning process.** Mature workers tend to see themselves as autonomous, self-directing, and responsible. Capitalize on this by encouraging them to take a very active role and share the responsibility for their success.
- **Ensure agency training materials are inclusive.** Include positive depictions of mature men and women in training materials and use them as instructional role models. Use mature workers as resources in training sessions.
- **Design and provide for cross-training.** Cross-training is often a focus for new workers. Providing these opportunities and programs for all employees develops on-the-job skills and enhances change opportunities.

E. Examples of Strategies Being Used by State Agencies

Many state agencies have already taken steps to address issues surrounding the aging workforce. Included here are several examples of how various agencies have chosen to address their problems and the issues facing mature workers. These are examples only and not all inclusive.

Department of Transportation

With a high pending number of management vacancies, the Department of Transportation created an opportunity to modify its hiring decisions using an innovative recruitment and selection process. This new approach has facilitated staffing transitions as senior managers retire.

Under the normal selection process, recruiting and selections are made as each position becomes vacant. Candidates apply for each position as they open up. This selection process had several downsides and did not take full advantage of opportunities facing the Department. This process did not allow candidates to have ample time or advanced knowledge of a full range of future positions available, resulting in a lack of time to make personal arrangements if relocation was necessary, or hasty decisions to seek positions which may not be an optimal professional or personal match.

The Department identified, with permission of incumbents, potential management positions that will become vacant in a six- to 12-month time horizon. Incumbents are not required to commit to a retirement date. These projections provide employees with a planning tool for determining when they will retire or whether they will try for an anticipated vacancy.

Also, to develop a constant pool of candidates for key job classes, the Department has opened announcements on an open continuous basis. As with other agencies, an applicant pool concept assists in the filling of vacancies. This approach allows applicants to be placed in the pool at any time, and to be notified of specific vacancies to determine interest.

Department of Revenue

Although, at the time of the study, the Department of Revenue had not made concrete plans on issues surrounding the aging workforce or succession planning, it had taken action towards obtaining information and had taken some informal steps to deal with these issues. According to one human resources professional with the agency, the Department will clearly have significant turnover in its senior management ranks over the next five years. The Department feels that planning in this area is necessary to ensure that it will have qualified people ready to step into key management roles.

Revenue has no formal succession planning programs. There have been, however, some informal ways used to help ensure that its human resources are prepared for the future. For example, some employees have completed developmental job assignments into the executive office. This has allowed them to gain experience and knowledge about working in upper management.

The agency has a very active mentoring program involving multiple state agencies that gives employees insight into the requirements of management.

Also, the Department of Revenue has utilized employee surveys to help identify the issues that most concern their employees.

Department of Corrections

Within the past several months, the Department of Corrections (DOC) has begun to look at the future of the organization in order to see whether there will be adequate human resources to fulfill the agency's functions. The agency looked at the age of its employees, their years of service, and their retirement plan to project the retirement eligibility of its employees. Although this was only a projection, it showed that retirement rates may indeed increase within the next few years.

The Department expects to face several major issues if it experiences increased retirement levels. The first difficulty may be a loss of organizational memory at the managerial levels of the agency. Corrections also may face issues at lower levels of the organization, as valuable experience could be lost in areas where it is vitally important. This problem may be made more challenging because replacing retirees through recruitment has become more difficult due to the low unemployment rate of the last several years.

The Department of Corrections has made efforts to address these issues and to help ensure that its future workforce has the necessary skills and experience to accomplish the agency's goals. The agency is in the beginning stages of this task; management training, mentoring, and employee development are areas being explored by the Department in its planning efforts.

One example of the work being done at the Department of Corrections is the development of a mentoring pilot program in 1998. The pilot program focuses on Washington Management Service (WMS) and exempt employees, but later stages of the program may expand to include all DOC workers. The program involves pairing up two employees and allowing them the chance to develop specific mutual goals and learn from each other. The relationship can be rewarding for both the mentor and the learning partner. The mentor shares his/her valuable experience and acts as a resource in introducing the learning partner to the inner-workings of the agency. The mentor gains from helping another employee to build confidence, as well as from the mutual sharing of information and knowledge that often takes place in a mentoring relationship.

Department of Retirement Systems

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) administers six statewide retirement systems and provides services to close to 400,000 public employees, teachers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, state patrol officers, judges, retirees, and their beneficiaries.

For DRS, the aging and retirement trends discussed in this report not only affect the agency workforce, they also have a direct impact on the agency's core business activities.

- In 1997, the total number of retirees in PERS, TRS (Teachers' Retirement System), and LEOFF (Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters Retirement System) amounted to just over 92,000. That number has risen to over 97,000 in 1999. In 2015, that number is expected to be over 170,000.

- In 1997, DRS processed 4,821 retirements. In 2015, DRS will process an estimated 9,665 retirements; more than doubling the number of annual retirements in just 17 years. (NOTE: This includes all systems handled by DRS, not just general government employees.)

DRS anticipated these trends in its *Workforce 2000* report published in 1992, and is using process improvements and new technology to prepare for this massive increase in workload. The Department recently put into place an Online Retirement Benefit Estimator for PERS Plan 2 which allows members to estimate their pension under a variety of scenarios such as retirement age, years of service, and earnings. A similar estimator is being developed for other retirement systems. The flexibility of the estimator allows members to consider possibilities on a self-help basis.

Other current projects included in the Department's strategy to utilize technology to enhance customer service and prepare for the growth in retirements over the next ten years include:

- Development of an Electronic Document Image Management System. The Department currently has several hundred thousand paper files containing member information. Converting these documents to an electronic format will speed document retrieval time and allow for a more efficient paperless workflow.
- Use of digital signatures and the internet for retirement data reporting.
- Use of the internet for customer and employer communications, including forms and imaged documents.

Department of Health

In 1998, the Department of Health's (DOH) Office of Human Resources developed a succession planning guide to assist the agency's various divisions with their workforce planning efforts. The guide was created in response to the knowledge that DOH could face a significant loss in personnel due to retirement by the year 2004. The guide acted as a step-by-step manual that could be followed as an organization created a plan to fit its specific needs. Also included were the answers to important questions surrounding the basics of succession planning and examples of forms, charts, and strategies that could be used to plan effectively. (More information about DOH's plan is available in Appendix A.)

The Department of Health made a genuine effort to encourage its divisions to make succession planning part of their strategic planning practices. Not only was the succession planning guide created, but the Human Resource Office also offered its services to any groups within the agency which wanted help formulating their plan. So far, two out of the five divisions within the Department have contacted the Human Resources Office and started doing some level of work towards creating a succession plan. According to the Director of Human Resources, formulating a succession plan can be a challenge, but putting it into practice is an even tougher task.

Currently, the Department of Health is considering whether to make succession planning mandatory for each division, and whether to make completed succession plans one of its human resource measures.

Department of Social and Health Services

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) began to work on a succession plan in response to a 1990 Governor's Executive Order aimed at encouraging agencies to take part in human resource planning. DSHS's Human Resource Development Plan, written that year, cited succession planning as a priority for the agency. Soon after, a committee was assembled that looked at the feasibility of creating an effective succession plan. The group consulted with experts from both within state government and private organizations. In 1992, it concluded that a guide to succession planning should be developed to aid the Department in its planning efforts. This project marked the first publication of its kind created by a Washington State agency. (See Appendix B for additional information.)

As of 1999, workforce planning was occurring at DSHS, but the planning has not necessarily been based on the agency's succession planning document. Many individuals within the agency are working to develop themselves, and many managers have formulated plans to replace valuable workers. These actions and plans can be effective whether or not they are based on the plan laid out by the agency. Some aspects of the succession plan guide do not have the full support of each employee. For example, some feel that the training and development programs present in DSHS's succession plan can cause employees to expect promotions that may never come.

Department of Personnel

Issues Employees Consider When Deciding to Retire

In July of 1999, the Department of Personnel (DOP) administered a voluntary survey to those DOP employees nearing retirement eligibility, asking questions regarding whether certain issues motivated them to continue working or retire, what issues most and least influenced them, and about their attitude towards downshifting. The goal of the survey was to determine the factors related to the aging workforce that most affect workers' decisions about retirement. Approximately one-third of eligible employees submitted responses to the survey. Out of these respondents, 76 percent were members of PERS 1 and 24 percent were members of PERS 2. Females submitted 82 percent of the survey responses.

The results of this small survey clearly demonstrate that the employees approaching retirement age at DOP are most concerned with financial and insurance issues. The first question on the survey asked employees to indicate whether various issues motivated them to retire, continue working, or were not a factor. Issues such as job satisfaction and work environment had different levels of importance to many different people. For the categories of retirement benefit levels, health insurance coverage, and financial issues, however, the vast majority of employees felt compelled to continue working.

The next set of questions in the survey asked employees to determine the two or three most and least influential factors in making a decision about whether and when to retire. Once again, it was apparent that financial issues were seen as key. The categories of retirement benefit levels and health insurance coverage were seen as being most important. Financial issues and other life goals were also considered key. The desire for a career change, job or workplace, other insurance coverage, and family care were all issues that DOP employees listed as having little importance when making retirement decisions.

Another question asked in the survey concerned downshifting. It asked whether or not DOP workers would consider downshifting as a career option, and whether a lower level of responsibility or a decrease in work hours that frequently accompany this choice appealed to them. There was no clear message from the responses volunteered to this question. Three respondents marked that downshifting was an option, four marked that it wasn't, and seven employees were not sure.

Succession Planning

Due to the large number of projected retirements within the Department over the next few years, DOP has begun work on an internal succession plan. Part of this plan will include professional development and managerial development programs.

Department of Ecology

The Department of Ecology estimates that 112 of their 1400 employees (8 percent) are eligible for retirement by June 2001. The average age of employees in the agency is 45. A variety of concerns regarding the impact of the aging of Ecology's workforce has been raised by employees and managers, given these demographic facts. Concerns include fear about potential bias against the mature worker; the need to budget for sick leave and annual leave pay out (average cost is \$10,000); the need to retain the expertise of the mature worker and consciously to expand their contributions and facilitate knowledge transfer; and the desire to identify ways to assist individuals considering or planning for their retirement to manage transitions.

Workforce Planning Strategies

In the last three years, more attention has been placed on Workforce or Succession Planning in the agency. In 1998, Ecology established a process whereby each program in the agency would develop a workforce management plan. The agency views succession planning (or the workforce plan) as a method for the organization to make better use of its most important resource – its people. Succession planning is intended to ensure continuity of operations by having a highly trained work force capable of filling in at a moment's notice if staff depart due to promotion, retirement, etc. Succession planning addresses the changes of the state workforce by identifying key functions needed to perform the agency's mission and providing guidelines for creating individual development plans that are linked directly to the agency's mission.

Recruitment and Training Strategies

One program in Ecology, the Washington Conservation Corps in the Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program, is working with the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps) to include a significant senior component in salmon restoration work. They will work with other national service groups such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to implement the initiative. (Please see Appendix C for details).

Information and Research

On average, 2.6 Ecology employees retire from state service each month. This raises a number of questions and concerns, such as: How does the agency capture the valuable human asset, the employees' expertise, in order to reinvest their knowledge and expand their contributions? How does the Department assist the employee considering or planning for their retirement to manage the transition? What do those employees close to or planning to retire want at this point in their careers?

In an attempt to respond to concerns raised in the agency, an idea was initiated by an employee to first gather more information regarding the experiences of retirees and then to facilitate discussions throughout the agency. The employee conducted a survey of a representative sample of retirees from Ecology from the last five years, asking them four questions:

- 1) How would you describe your life experiences since you retired?
- 2) What do you wish you knew as you were preparing for retirement that you know now?
- 3) During your last year at Ecology, what positive things did the organization do to help you with the “transition to retirement” and how could the assistance be improved?
- 4) Would you be willing to sit on a panel to help others benefit from your experiences?

The purpose of the survey and subsequent discussions is to research and analyze the issues involved with retirement and the potential impacts on employees, managers, and to the successful achievement of the agency’s mission.

This research is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- To identify ways to retain institutional memory and facilitate the transfer of knowledge.
- To identify potential problem areas and opportunities as the workforce ages.
- To identify internal policy areas that may need to be reviewed.
- To provide information on strategies for Ecology to consider in future planning efforts and implementation.
- To survey a sample of Ecology retirees to find out what they would have liked, were seeking, or experienced in their pre-retirement years at Ecology.
- To address proactive ways to include in the process attention to the emotional and personal impacts to the individual and his/her colleagues.

Employment Security Department

Leadership Development Strategy

In the Employment Security Department (ESD), almost one-third of the work force is eligible to retire between 2000 and 2005. Many of those eligible to retire are in key leadership and highly technical professional positions. Further, in many cases, those who would most logically be expected to replace the retiring employees are themselves eligible to retire at about the same time. A parallel issue for leaders throughout the agency is that ESD has totally reengineered its service delivery methodologies over the last three years, and current leaders are discovering a need for many new leadership tools not needed before.

To meet these challenges, ESD has made a leadership development strategy one of its key business initiatives. The goal of this strategy is to increase the number of highly qualified candidates for promotion in the organization. This strategy is also consistent with the goal that ESD will become a learning organization that enables employees at every level within the organization to grow.

ESD obtained input from line staff and leaders throughout the organization in order to frame the leadership attributes needed to help ESD to succeed in the future. These attributes will form the basis for individual leadership development assessments and activities.

Representatives from Human Resources prepared division-by-division lists of those eligible to retire, and met with executives from each division to identify and prioritize:

- Critical professional and leadership positions of a highly technical nature to be targeted for succession planning
- Leadership positions they would hope to fill from a pool of potential leaders
- Substantive knowledge areas and special qualifications for leaders in their division
- New tools needed by current leaders

Many targeted technical, professional, and leadership positions, because of their long learning curves, will be filled using a competitive process to select a successor who will be "in-training" to the position. The trainee will be developed through a combination of formal courses, mentoring, and developmental job assignments in accord with the specific training plan and agreement.

For other positions, where needed knowledge of the division can be gained after appointment to the position, positions will be filled competitively closer to the time of the actual vacancy, with candidates from a pool of potential leaders encouraged to apply. For this pool, the leadership development strategy calls for a wide variety of growth activities, and a very open process, based on the employee's own development profile and Manager/Employee Development and Performance Plan. This strategy is in the final stages of design as this report is going to press.

It is projected, however, that the program will include such activities as leadership and relationship skill courses offered by the Department of Personnel and ESD, televised "brown bags" with leadership speakers, readings, online learning, video- and audiotapes, and informal mentoring. Current leaders will also participate in formal mentoring, courses designed to give them job-specific skills and leadership tools, and more intensive 360-degree assessments. Executive coaching will be available.

The leadership development program will include line employees as well as those already in leadership, since ESD needs to prepare individuals to fill critical leadership positions at several levels within the agency.

F. Strategies Being Used by Other Public Jurisdictions

The issues faced by Washington concerning the aging workforce are a nationwide trend, which means all types of organizations have either begun to, or will soon have to deal with these problems. Because aging in the workforce is not unique to our state's situation, the task force identified fourteen state governments and other jurisdictions that are considered similar to Washington State and/or were likely to be addressing the issue of increased retirements in the workforce. They were asked if:

1. Large numbers of employees were expected to retire within the next few years.
2. The number of impending retirements was perceived as a problem.
3. Any research is being conducted regarding the impact of impending retirements.
4. Any proactive measures to mitigate the effects of retirements have been taken.

Out of the 14 states contacted, only three were taking active steps towards studying and finding ways to deal with the issues surrounding the aging workforce. Michigan, Minnesota, and New York were researching this issue, and provided us with examples of how we might want to examine this problem. Minnesota, however, was the only state which has actually taken action. In addition, Idaho and Oregon see the aging workforce as an issue, but have not done any significant research on the matter. These two states do, however, have laws in effect that may be of interest to Washington State agencies concerning the re-employment of mature workers.

The following descriptions summarize the status in these jurisdictions at the time the task force conducted its research. New information has appeared since this research was conducted, and is included under the heading "Recent Developments" beginning on page 35.

Michigan

The state of Michigan produces a Workforce Report that includes an age analysis. In 1996-1997 its workforce decreased 8 percent, largely due to retirements. The state offered early retirement incentives in order to downsize. The early retirement program offered reduced age and number of years of service required to retire. In addition, the program increased the retirement allowance provided to these retirees. Departments were allowed to replace one of every four positions vacated under the retirement program. Michigan is facing a large number of additional retirements but is not taking any action to offset this trend because of the need to reduce their workforce.

New York

The Department of Civil Service prepares an annual State Workforce Management Plan, which examines state workforce trends. As part of the process, state agencies are asked to anticipate changes over the next four years.

The 1998 Plan determined that New York State's workforce continues to age. The average age of state employees is 44.4 years old with an average of 14.3 years of service. Currently, 13.4 percent of the workforce is over 55 years old. Employees tend to retire at either age 55 or 62. During Fiscal Year 97-98, the state offered a retirement incentive program to mitigate the effects of planned reductions in force. Two percent of the workforce retired. During each of the next 10 years, New York State anticipates an increase in the number of retirements.

Information on 57 separate agencies is provided in the Plan. Four of the 21 agencies that provided information regarding their most critical human resource issue cited the increasing number of retiring employees. These agencies anticipated that the high number of retirements will require attention, creativity, and restructuring in order to ensure that the level of service is maintained. As with other states, New York state government is downsizing. Therefore, efforts to mitigate the effects of retirements must be balanced with the need to reduce staffing overall.

Minnesota

While the issues surrounding the aging workforce are a nationwide trend, different regions are likely to experience the effects of these trends at different times. Minnesota is an example of an area that has been forced to deal with this problem earlier than most states. Because they have created innovative ways to deal with these issues, they offer an important example.

The state of Minnesota is concerned with the overall labor shortage, recognizing aging of the workforce as an underlying cause of slower labor force growth. This state anticipates that 60 percent of its managers will be retiring in the near future.

In an attempt to mitigate the effects of the labor shortage, Minnesota has developed material on redeployment and strategic staffing. Managers are encouraged to be more proactive and develop comprehensive staffing projections. They are also educated regarding striking a balance between long-range workforce planning and fulfilling current skill needs. Employees are encouraged to be proactive and responsible for their own careers. They are educated regarding using initiative to benefit from redeployment and re-skilling opportunities. The state supports employees through agency-funded training and a tuition reimbursement program. Generally, the amount of tuition that is reimbursed depends upon the relevancy of the course to the employee's position. Nontraditional training opportunities such as coaching, shadowing, cross training, and mentoring are encouraged. Minnesota has moved to a human resource system that focuses on competencies. They feel this allows for greater opportunities for promotion, lateral moves, rotational assignments, and voluntary demotions.

In the publication Strategies for Staffing Change: Redeployment Services Toolbox, the Minnesota Department of Employee Relations outlined the state's methods to help recruit, retain, and improve the performance of its employees. They also developed ways that agencies could ensure their key functions would be successfully accomplished in the future.

Minnesota's program is based on "re-skilling" workers in order to provide them, and the organization, with "competencies". The term re-skilling is defined as maximizing the employability, flexibility, and capability of human resources. The term competency is defined in the program as the combination of skills, knowledge, performance, and behaviors that contribute to improved employee and organizational performance. These investments in the workers serve multiple purposes. Not only do they give employees the drive to improve and tools to succeed, but Minnesota also believes that this investment attracts people to its workforce and helps it to retain workers. This is because they appreciate these opportunities to improve and have a say in the process.

Minnesota tried to create options that would meet the needs of a variety of different learning styles, so that everyone's needs could be met. Classic training methods such as classroom training, or on-site training with co-workers, were used. Also, they utilized nontraditional practices

such as coaching, job shadowing, mentoring, and temporary assignments to meet the “re-skilling” needs of their employees and the organization itself.

Idaho

Agencies are addressing the high retirement rate issue individually. The Department of Transportation (DOT) faces the greatest challenge because of the large number of engineers that are retiring. To offset the loss of experienced personnel, DOT hires retirees as temporaries and consultants. State laws require a 90 day waiting period prior to hiring a retiree and there are restrictions regarding how much money an individual can earn.

Oregon

Oregon faced a large number of retirements in 1998 due to the structure of the state retirement system. They have not engaged in a formal study to assess the impact of future retirement activity. Oregon is able to mitigate the impact of retirements because state laws allow for retired employees to work in temporary positions. Retirees must be employed following the policy for temporary appointments. Retirees receiving a service retirement allowance may be employed without loss of benefits if the time they work for participating public employer(s) does not exceed 1,039 hours in a calendar year. Because of the high number of retirements in 1998, Oregon currently has a large pool of retired workers in temporary positions. Their laws are effectively offsetting problems that may have occurred due to this retirement trend.

Illinois

Illinois has continually had early retirement bills before the Legislature, but to date none have passed. The primary concern regarding these bills is the initial cost of implementation. To recover from the costs associated with sick and vacation leave cash outs, numerous agencies anticipated they would have to leave positions vacant for several months.

Montana

Due to retirement incentives, Montana experienced a high number of retirements five years ago. They do not anticipate a wave of retirements larger than that which they have already experienced. The state continues to downsize so retirements are not a concern.

Other Jurisdictions

The task force also contacted the following states or jurisdictions, but found that, at the time of the research, they were not involved in any research or discussion of this issue: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, Wisconsin and King County.

Recent Developments

As the task force completed its work and this report was being prepared for publication, numerous articles began to appear regarding this topic. During this interim, many public jurisdictions have begun serious efforts in workforce and succession planning.

In February 2000, *Governing Magazine* published its report on the Maxwell School study of city governments. Part of their review included workforce planning in local jurisdictions. They mentioned several cities, such as Denver, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Austin, that have undertaken serious workforce planning efforts to meet the challenges presented by impending retirements.

In the March 2000 issue of *Governing Magazine*, Jonathan Walters mentions additional efforts. Iowa has just created a special office for workforce planning to begin analysis and strategy development. Pennsylvania is studying age patterns and skill loss and focusing on recruitment campaigns to fill the gaps. Shreveport, Louisiana; San Diego County, California; Brevard County, Florida; and Kansas City, Missouri, are others mentioned in the same article. All face similar issues, along with other governments across the country.

Several occupational sections of the federal government were featured in a six article series in the Washington Post in early May. Sixty-five percent of the Senior Executive Service will be eligible to retire by 2004. The articles covered the many challenges the federal sector faces in replacing staff in these and other key positions.

Interest in and attention to the ramifications of anticipated retirements in public jurisdictions continues to grow.

G. Strategies Being Used in the Private Sector

The aging workforce is a trend that is not confined to either the public or private sector; instead, its problems will be felt throughout society. Some private organizations have already taken steps to deal with the issues surrounding aging workers, and these programs can be models or act as foundations for others building their plans. Although many of these programs are aimed at similar issues, it is apparent that different circumstances within each company dictate many different responses. The major issues faced by these organizations were: meeting the specific needs of mature employees, retaining experienced workers, educating employees and improving the workforce, and ensuring that their workers were adequately prepared for the future.

The following is an overview of some of the approaches gained through internet research and personal contacts. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list, nor a representative sample. It is solely intended to provide ideas for addressing similar issues facing state agencies.

Weyerhaeuser

The Weyerhaeuser Company is one of the largest forest products companies in the world, as well as an important organization for the economy of Washington State. A human resource professional within the company outlined some of Weyerhaeuser's policies and programs that deal with the issues faced specifically by mature workers. A large succession planning initiative has recently begun in order to create a standardized process for naming and developing succession candidates for key positions. In order to find out more about the satisfaction and feelings of its retirees, the company has begun to pay more attention to the exit interview results of employees leaving the company. Weyerhaeuser also offers some flexibility of scheduling to its employees, but these are at the discretion of the employee's manager. The most common alternative schedules are four ten-hour days per week, or nine nine-hour days in two weeks. Telecommuting is also an option. In addition, the company does rehire retirees as part time employees, but this is normally done after retirement and would not be considered downshifting. Weyerhaeuser seems to be just beginning to address these important issues as the company realizes the possible future impact of the aging workforce.

Wells Fargo and Company

Wells Fargo, a national banking company from San Francisco, offers a wide variety of scheduling and leave programs to help its workers accomplish the difficult task of balancing responsibilities at work and those at home. Policies offered are flextime, a compressed workweek, part-time options, job sharing, and telecommuting. Another innovative program offered by Wells Fargo is a sabbatical program called "Personal Growth Leave". Employees in good standing with the company and who have worked there for at least ten years are eligible for this fully paid time off. Workers must apply for this leave and state what they plan to do during their time off. They must plan to participate in some personal growth activity to be accepted. Afterwards, they must write a report stating what they gained from the leave. This program is not meant to be a rehearsal retirement, but instead the company sees it as a refresher for its experienced workers. For example, many employees use the program to plan and prepare for second careers.

Levi Strauss & Co.

Levi Strauss & Company, located in California, employs approximately 27,000 people in the United States alone. A work/family survey given to its employees in 1990 told management that employees wanted a variety of options to meet individual work and personal needs. Since then, Levi has offered a wide range of flexibility to its employees so that they can deal successfully with the demands of work and home. Programs such as job sharing, pre-retirement/life planning seminars, and downshifting options are offered to allow mature employees to design a schedule that best fits their lives.

Travelers Insurance

The Travelers Corporation, located in Hartford Connecticut, is one of the largest insurance companies in the country. Its Retiree Job Bank program developed out of the need for temporary workers familiar with the details of the company. In the 1970s, Travelers began a customer service hotline, but they did not want to shift permanent staff away from their positions. Instead, the company hired back retired employees who were interested in working part-time.

This program worked so successfully for Travelers that they opened other temporary positions to retirees, and in 1981 opened up a Retiree Job Bank to register retirees who wanted to work with the company. Soon, demand for these workers was double the supply, so Travelers opened the program up to retirees from other insurance companies.

By 1991, over 400 temps, on average, worked for Travelers each week and over 60 percent of these workers were retirees. The Retiree Job Bank resulted in saving money by avoiding the use of a temp agency, lower recruiting costs, lower rates of absenteeism, and an increase in efficiency because the retirees needed little training to be familiar with the company.

Polaroid Corporation

The Polaroid Corporation, located in Cambridge Massachusetts, offers a variety of educational opportunities and flexible scheduling options to its employees. The purpose of these programs is to help retirement aged employees understand and make informed decisions about their retirement. Different workers have different questions and concerns about the retirement process, and Polaroid makes every attempt to address this diversity. Workers are educated and their questions are welcomed during pre-retirement and counseling seminars that are offered. The focus of the program is on maintaining the highest quality of life and dignity for employees making an important life transition. Flexible scheduling offered includes downshifting to part-time, flextime, consulting contracts, and optional membership in a retiree temp pool.

One valuable option has been the rehearsal retirement program offered by Polaroid. This allows employees to try the retirement lifestyle by giving them up to six months of unpaid leave. They are free to decide whether they want to return to work or retire at any time during the program. Another frequently used option has been the tapering-off plan. In this program employees are allowed the chance to transition into retirement. Potential retirees are allowed to arrange an individual tapering-off plan with their supervisor. Employees can utilize this program for up to five years. These programs are designed to help employees ensure that they are doing what is right for them. By giving workers options, Polaroid is also able to retain the skills and knowledge of some workers who otherwise might simply retire abruptly and permanently.

Bell Atlantic

The New York telecommunications company, Bell Atlantic, created and funds an innovative education program for its employees. The company states that its reason for investing in mature workers is because the success of the company lies just as much in the skills, decision making, and dedication of employees as it does in management's investments and decisions. Also, Bell Atlantic has found that helping its employees grow through training makes them more productive; they do a higher quality of work, and often are more committed. Next Step is the name of the project currently conducted by the company in cooperation with local community colleges. The program allows Bell Atlantic employees, most of whom are mature workers, to earn their two-year associate degree in applied science with a focus on telecommunications technology. Next Step students attend class at the colleges one day a week, while on company time. The company pays for all of the employee's expenses: tuition, books, and even the laptop computers each student is given throughout the program. There are approximately 1,600 people in the program at any one time. According to the company, this program has improved the lives of many employees and the production at Bell Atlantic.

Examples from *Human Resource Executive Magazine*

Human Resource Executive magazine ran articles on phased retirement in the March 2000 issue and on retention of mature workers in April 2000. Neuville Industries, a hosiery manufacturer, and Varian Medical Systems, Inc., provide examples of companies with successful phased retirement programs. The following examples regarding hiring and retaining mature workers come from the April 2000 issue:

"Motivated by today's uncomfortably tight labor market and the demographics-based predictions of worse to come, a few companies are already trying new ways to tap the skills of people age 50 and up. A few other companies, due to historical quirks, have relied heavily on older workers for years.

The experience of these two groups of companies offers important clues for other HR executives who are beginning to wonder how they will get through the predicted demographic crunch. To wit:

- Mellon Financial Corp. (formerly Mellon Bank) is working with nonprofit organizations and government to recruit and train older workers for backroom operations. If the program works as hoped, it will generate 1,000 new hires annually for the 28,000-employee institution.
- CVS Corp., the nation's largest drugstore chain in store count, has already hired more than 2,000 older workers for entry-level jobs by taking advantage of a similar nonprofit and government alliance. The turnover rate for these workers is far less than for the company's workforce as a whole.
- Deloitte Consulting will name its first "senior partners" this year in a bid to retain seasoned executive talent that might retire.
- Bonne Bell Inc., the cosmetics manufacturer, has added more workers to a special unit designed to protect older employees from unpleasant interactions with younger bosses and workers.

- The Aerospace Corp. is retaining the expertise of retired engineers by hiring them back as casual, part-time workers.
- US West, with many employees eligible to retire, hopes age diversity training will boost retention.
- Vita Needle Co., a small, highly successful manufacturer, attracts and keeps older workers by offering the ultimate in flexibility.”²⁰

²⁰ “Coming of Age”, Human Resource Executive, April 2000

Section II: Recommendations

State government needs to take steps now to address the current and potential future impacts of the state workforce aging trends. The task force identified the following strategies to be implemented by the state or by individual agencies. While most of these strategies could be implemented immediately, within existing personnel policies and laws, others would require policy and/or statutory changes. Tools available to agencies to assist in carrying out these recommendations are listed in Section III of this report.

Workforce Analysis and Planning

Agencies need to build on past or existing workforce analysis and planning efforts to determine how agency programs may be affected by increased retirement rates or a rapidly maturing workforce. The following are some specific suggestions to help guide this workforce planning effort:

- Determine potential program reductions, growth, or re-organization affecting staffing in the next few years
- Compute average turnover rates and retirement rates for agency/program/unit
- Identify staff eligible to retire in the next five years (or longer)
- Determine whether those eligible are likely to actually retire
- Determine how key positions or programs may be affected by retirements
- Identify organizational changes or position level changes that could occur due to vacancies
- Identify internal and external sources for candidates to replace retirees
- Identify potential problem areas for replacement staffing (training of internal staff, unemployment rates, graduation rates, market availability, etc.)
- Develop strategies for overcoming potential difficulties (succession planning, knowledge transfer options, potential re-assignments, internal training/development/mentoring, retention, use of part-time employees, re-training/re-deployment, recruitment strategies, alternate organizational structure, etc.)

Note: Agencies need to take precautions against potential age discrimination if the above information gathering affects promotional or other hiring decisions.

Using Succession Planning to Prepare for Future Needs

Succession planning is a way for agencies to prepare for future workforce needs by developing a pool of qualified candidates who have the skills and knowledge needed to perform key job functions. Succession planning also provides an avenue for long term employees to pass on accumulated knowledge, experience, and historical perspective which might otherwise be lost to the organization.

A number of state agencies are already doing some work in the area of succession planning. Some examples can be found in Appendixes A and B of this report. The Department of Personnel is developing succession planning tools and consultation services to assist state agencies in this area. (See Tools and Resources section for more information.)

The task force recommends that the Department of Personnel identify key statewide workforce competencies for development, aligned with state objectives and taking into account potential high need areas affected by rising retirement rates (such as management) to support agencies' succession planning efforts.

Streamlining Recruitment and Compensation Processes

The state needs quicker, more flexible mechanisms to address recruitment and compensation issues, especially when it comes to replacing or retaining employees in key positions, or where large numbers of retirements could be detrimental to a program. Within existing law, the Department of Personnel is making a number of improvements to address these issues, including streamlined selection processes and a broadbanded classification system for managers. However, revisions to the civil service statutes are needed to remove systemic barriers, such as restrictions on the number of applicants an agency can consider (known as the "Rule of 7").

Enhancing Recruitment Efforts

Agencies need to plan now for future recruitment needs and find ways to be more competitive in an increasingly tight labor market. In conjunction with streamlined recruitment and compensation processes, enhanced recruitment efforts are needed to combat the effects of increased turnover and greater competition for skilled workers. The Department of Personnel has made a number of improvements in this area, including: enhancing the state's on-line recruitment methods; partnering with state agencies to conduct targeted recruitments for hard-to-fill job classes; and creating an array of high quality informational materials to more effectively market the benefits of state employment.

In addition to working with the Department of Personnel to implement aggressive and creative recruitment efforts, the following are some steps individual agencies can take to increase their recruitment effectiveness:

- Identify a wide range of resources and options, including internal and external sources for candidates
- Develop and maintain contacts with good recruitment sources (diversity organizations, professional associations, retirement associations, etc.)
- Identify potential roles/needs for retirees and their expertise
- Develop flexible approaches to assigning work and cross-training
- Develop creative strategies to attract and train employees
- Take advantage of hiring flexibilities that currently exist within the state personnel system, such as: in-training options; the Washington Management Service; the College Recruitment Program; the Governor's Internship Program; and intermittent, temporary, or part-time employment.

Retaining Skilled Workers

Retention of currently employed mature workers could be key in avoiding a loss of skill and experience that could be detrimental to an organization.

Flexible work arrangements are useful in retaining mature employees because they allow workers to stay a part of the labor force, but with much flexibility. Working on an as-needed basis allows them to be involved in other activities, but allows the agency to utilize their skills and

knowledge when needed. The following are some options agencies could use to help retain some of this highly experienced segment of the workforce:

- Scheduling flexibility, including part-time, intermittent, flex-time, or job sharing
- Leave options to address health or family care issues
- Leave options for personal goals
- Telecommuting options
- Assignment or career changes
- Downshifting options

Through the Voluntary Separation and Downshifting Incentives program passed by the 1999 Legislature, agencies can offer financial incentives for downshifting. For example, agencies can offer incentives to those willing to move from full-time to part-time employment, to accept voluntary leave without pay, to take a demotion, or to take a temporary separation for development purposes. In considering how to use these programs effectively, agencies must take into account their impact on the retention of skilled workers, as well as fiscal savings and efficiency gains.

Such options can benefit both the agency and the employees. The agency has the flexibility to design a downshifting incentive program that fits the agency's needs. This can be an effective tool for reducing costs by downsizing or reorganizing to use staff resources more effectively.

For the employees, the option to work fewer hours, take time off, or demote to a less stressful position, could give them greater freedom, less stress, and the time to pursue personal needs and interests. This could encourage them to remain on the job, rather than retiring or leaving for other employment.

The following are steps agencies may wish to take if they are considering the possibility of designing and implementing downshifting incentives:

- Identify staff who would be interested in reduced hours for family, personal, or career reasons, or temporary separation for development purposes
- Identify program areas that would benefit from reduced hours or staffing reductions
- Develop strategies and incentives to accomplish agency goals

The Voluntary Separation and Downshifting Incentives program is currently available through June 30, 2001. Permanent adoption of this program by the Legislature would support long term agency strategies.

Hiring Retirees As a Source of Experienced Workers

Retirees have a lot of experience and accumulated knowledge that could benefit hiring agencies. Many are willing, even eager, to return to the workforce under the right circumstances. Some may wish to put their experience to work in the same field as their previous employment. Others may be looking for the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge in another field of interest.

In many cases, retirees are looking for flexible work arrangements, such as temporary, part-time, or intermittent employment, so that they can continue to pursue other interests. Factors that may influence retirees to return to the workforce include a need for supplemental income, a

desire for mental stimulation and social interaction, or the satisfaction to be derived from the work itself.

Targeted recruitment efforts are needed to reach this segment of the population. For example, a message that appeals to someone just starting out in their career may not have the same draw for someone who has retired and is looking for short term or part-time employment. And job fairs targeted to recent college graduates are not likely to draw a lot of retirees.

To help in this effort, the Department of Personnel is currently developing a pool of retirees interested in state positions. Such a pool could provide agencies with a ready source of experienced people for temporary or intermittent appointments or short-term projects.

Reducing Post-Retirement Employment Restrictions

Current law restricts retirees to working fewer than 70 hours a month, or for no more than five months of a calendar year while still receiving retirement benefits. (Any amount of time worked in a month counts as one month of work in Washington's system.) Working more than this will cause a retiree to lose retirement benefits and become an employee again. The person can retire anew, however.

Agencies that wish to employ retirees often spend a lot of administration time working with the employee and supervisor to determine just how much time the retiree can work and still remain eligible to receive their retirement benefits. Administrative time could be reduced and agencies given more flexibility in employing retirees by revising the current post-retirement work restrictions to base them on the number of hours worked in a calendar year (e.g., 800-900 hours or a certain percentage of retirement income). The Teacher's Retirement System uses a formula based on hours; the number of hours can be increased under certain circumstances where an agency need is established.

The Department of Retirements Systems has begun the process for changing these administrative rules. Law changes may be needed to further ease restrictions or provide exceptions if, in the future, the state needs to attract more retirees to return to the workforce.

Examining Restrictions on Health Insurance Coverage

The state does not currently pay health care premiums after retirement. Nor is it possible to pay health care as an incentive for retirees to return to work for the state unless they return at least half time for more than six months. At the same time, retirement law restricts retirees to fewer than 70 hours a month, or a total of five months to retain retirement benefits. Due to the combined effect of these restrictions, agencies are not able to pay health care premiums as an incentive for state retirees to return to work as part-time employees.

If in the future the state needs to provide incentives for retirees to return to the workforce, allowing the state to pay for health care premiums for retirees under 65 who return to state employment with less than half-time status or for fewer than six months could allow agencies to tap into the expertise of retirees more readily.

Assessing and Improving Organizational Environments

Agencies need to ensure that work facilities, equipment, and processes are safe and ergonomically sound for an aging workforce and that the work environment is supportive of employees of all ages. Doing so helps employees to be more productive and reduces the possibility of injury.

By conducting a workplace assessment, agencies can determine where changes and improvements are needed. Such an assessment might include the following:

- Determine any ergonomic issues or safety education needs.
- Determine whether the organizational environment provides the appropriate work incentives.
- Determine whether there are specific problems or biases in operation.
- Consider implementing employee surveys with questions to get at potential stereotypes or biases related to aging.
- Develop a plan for addressing any issues to align with the agency's strategic plan.

Educating and Retraining the Workforce

Retraining allows employees to update skills and expands organizational capacity. Providing mature workers with adequate training and development opportunities enables them to keep pace with workplace and technology changes so that they can continue to be productive and feel valued and fully engaged in the agency mission. Agencies can also prepare workers of all ages to fill future vacancies by providing them with targeted training and development opportunities, such as rotational assignments.

The following are some specific strategies adapted from the state of Minnesota's Redeployment Services Toolbox.²¹ They are equally applicable to Washington State agencies.

- Determine the present state of the organization's resources, anticipating the competencies and skills that will be essential to succeed in the future.
- From these assessments, gauge the overall strengths and weaknesses of individual employees and the organization itself.
- Have workers, together with their supervisors, create and follow through on individual development plans, with a focus on meeting the future employment and development goals of the employees as well as addressing the skills needed by the state. (The goal here is to provide workers with avenues to improve themselves while at the same time ensuring that the anticipated essential competencies will be present in the workforce of the future, both on a short- and long-term basis.)
- Create the actual training opportunities, based on future as well as current needs.

The task force recommends the following additional steps to supplement the targeted, competency-based training discussed above:

²¹ Strategies for Staffing Change: Redeployment Services Toolbox, State of Minnesota.

- Provide retirement planning information to employees
- Provide wellness and safety education
- Include issues of aging in diversity awareness training
- Consider mentoring programs

Section III: Tools and Resources

Workforce Analysis and Planning

In response to the issues identified in this report, the Department of Personnel is developing a new service to provide guidance and assistance in workforce planning. For more information on this service, visit the Department of Personnel website at

<http://www.wa.gov/dop/workforceplanning>. The website also includes a Resource Directory, which has literature references and website links on workforce planning and related subjects.

The following additional resources are being developed and will be available by Fall 2000:

- Complete Workforce Planning website
- Comprehensive workforce planning guidelines, model, and tool kit, including an emphasis on linking workforce needs to agency strategic plans
- Workforce competency assessment models
- Training needs assessment tool
- Profiles of suggested competencies for selected generic occupational categories
- Workforce Planning Consultation Team (central source of assistance at Department of Personnel)

The Department of Personnel's Data Warehouse contains statewide and agency employee information. Examples include workforce composition by job classification and salary; turnover rates; retirement eligibility and projections; and workforce demographics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, geographic location, and length of service. Some levels of detail are only available to authorized users due to the confidential nature of the information. More generic information is available on the Data Warehouse website at <http://dop16wbp/dw97/dwindex.htm> (note: this website can only be accessed from within the state's computer system firewall).

The Employment Security Department has a wide range of labor market information and publishes regular trends and reports on employment issues. This information is available on its website at <http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea>. ESD also has an on-line database (WILMA) with state labor market information (<http://63.84.240.100/wilma/>). The Office of Financial Management offers extensive demographic data and reports on its website at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov>.

Succession Planning Assistance

The Department of Personnel (DOP) recently held customer focus groups to discuss agency training and development needs. The focus groups were composed of representatives of fifteen state agencies, and included a cross-section of large, medium, and small sized agencies. The representatives of these sample agencies were primarily management level employees, such as executives, middle managers, and human resource professionals.

One of the clear themes that emerged from these focus groups was the importance of succession planning and the challenges of implementing a succession plan.

In response to customer needs, the Department of Personnel is developing a model to assist agencies in creating their own specific succession plan and will offer consultation services for agencies desiring in-depth assistance beyond a succession model. Information on these services will be provided on the workforce planning website listed above.

Job Recruitment and Outreach

Customized Recruitment and Outreach Assistance: Department of Personnel staff are available to assist agencies to develop customized, targeted recruitment efforts for hard-to-fill positions. Agencies also have the option to list their exempt, local list, and Washington Management Service job openings on the Department of Personnel website, in addition to the general recruitment announcements published by DOP. The Department of Personnel also conducts outreach recruitment efforts at appropriate locations and events such as job fairs, colleges, and military installations.

A number of programs and options that currently exist within the state personnel system provide hiring flexibility:

- In-training programs
- Washington Management Service
- College Recruitment Program
- Governor's Internship Program
- Intermittent, temporary, or part-time employment

Retiree Candidate Pool: As stated earlier, the Department of Personnel is developing a pool of retirees interested in state employment. Further information will be provided to agency human resources staff as the pool is developed.

Return to Work Program: Another source of skilled workers is the pool of injured state workers who have been retrained and are ready to return to work. The Departments of Personnel and Labor and Industries manage this program in partnership.

Retention Tools

Flexible Work Scheduling Options: Providing scheduling flexibility may allow agencies to retain valuable employees who will continue to work because they can find schedules that meet their needs. There are many different work scheduling options available, and they can even be developed on an individual basis. The personnel system also provides for part-time, intermittent, and tandem employment options, and includes a telecommuting option that allows employees to work from home. Agency human resource staff can help managers and employees to determine which options best meet the needs of the employee and the agency.

Leave Options: There are rules in the state system that may provide avenues agencies can use to allow employees caring for family members to remain in the workforce. The rules offer leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, leave due to unforeseen family care, shared leave, the use of paid sick leave for family members, and leave without pay. These may allow the agency to retain valuable mature workers who might otherwise have to quit or retire. It also greatly benefits the employees dealing with this difficult situation. More information on leave options is available from agency human resource offices. Personnel system rules related to

leave can be viewed on the Department of Personnel website at <http://www.wa.gov/dop/lib/hrdr/356wacs/wac35618.htm>.

Dependent Care Assistance Program: State employees who are responsible for eldercare costs for elderly dependents can reduce federal income and social security taxes through this program. An equal amount of earnings are set aside each pay period to reimburse dependent care expenses. Taxes are computed after the amount has been deducted. Further information is available on the Department of Retirement Systems website at <http://www.wa.gov/drs/dcp/dcapview.htm>.

Recognition Options: Some monetary recognition options are available for all employees and additional options exist for Washington Management Service employees. There are numerous creative non-monetary approaches to rewards and recognition in use by state agencies.

Tools for Assessing and Improving Organizational Environments

The Department of Personnel offers a fee-based employee survey service which can be adapted to meet specific agency needs, and is developing a menu of follow-up services. Organizational development and facilitation assistance is available through the Department of Personnel's Human Resource Development Services.

The Department of Labor and Industries offers educational information and materials on ergonomics and workplace safety.

Education and Training Resources

Training Support: A wide variety of training options are available to state employees, ranging from hands-on computer courses to entry or advanced management development courses. Most of the courses and workshops offered by the Department of Personnel can be customized to fit the needs of individual agencies, so it is easy to tailor employee training to fit agency succession plans.

Educational leave can be used to facilitate employee development by allowing employees time away from work to attend classes or educational programs. Tuition reimbursement is also a tool that can allow someone to seek educational opportunities; some agencies provide funding for classes taken by employees. Another aid to the re-training of employees can be rotational assignments, also called developmental assignments, in which employees can work within the agency or with other organizations to learn skills and knowledge to help them perform their job better.

360° Skill Assessment Instrument: Demographic information reveals senior employees will be retiring at the greatest rate. Given most of these senior employees will be retiring from middle and upper management positions, replacement or succession efforts may be best directed at further development of entry level managers to succeed retiring higher level managers. The Department of Personnel's Management Excellence Through Assessment (META 360°) tool could be very valuable to agencies to sharpen their focus on the specific type of management development needed most. Agencies can contact Mike Dunstan, at (360) 664-1927, to find out more about the META 360° assessment tool.

Performance Evaluation System: The evaluation system implemented by Washington State agencies in 1999, the Employee Development and Performance Plan, includes training and continuous learning as an essential component of performance expectations and measures.

Career Development and Transition Services: The Department of Personnel's Career Services Program offers career planning workshops and career counseling. The services are provided at no cost to employees who are at risk of layoff. For employees who are not at risk of layoff, services are available to individual employees or to agencies on a fee-for-service basis.

Mentoring Support: The Department of Personnel has a publication available that offers guidance in setting up mentoring programs. Several state agencies have had active programs and have experiences to share.

Retirement Information

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) offers one-on-one sessions with retirement systems counselors to aid employees in understanding their retirement benefits. Retirement workshops offered by DRS provide mature employees with valuable information on their retirement plan. Information regarding Deferred Compensation is available as part of the general workshops and as a separate presentation.

To further assist employees in making informed decisions, the DRS website (<http://www.wa.gov/drs>) now includes retirement benefit calculations for PERS 2 members. DOP & DRS are also working on making Deferred Compensation information more readily available on-line.

This information can help employees plan for the future and make important decisions, but they are not substitutions for retirement planning. DRS does not provide help in decision making.

Health Insurance Resources

There are some insurance benefits that tend to be of particular interest to mature employees and retirees. One example is optional insurance for long-term care that is offered to state employees at a group rate as one of several coverage options.

A recently adopted program called VEBA-MEP (Voluntary Employee Benefits Administration-Medical Expense Plan) allows employees retiring from a participating group to deposit sick leave cash out in a tax-free trust fund to use to pay health insurance premiums and other qualified medical expense.

Another program that can be of benefit to mature workers and all state employees is the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Acts of 1985 (COBRA). This allows employees and anyone covered under their insurance to continue to receive health coverage for a set period under certain conditions, even after the worker is no longer employed for the state. This policy can be enacted if an employee dies, quits, or has his/her working hours greatly reduced. Mature employees and their families can make sure that they will be able to receive health care coverage, whether the employee retires, is sick, or stops working.

Section IV: Information Resources on Aging Issues

Internet Resources and Websites *

AARP: Working Options at <http://www.aarp.org> often provides, among other information, considerations for mature workers who want to stay in the workforce, and strategies for overcoming several possible employment barriers.

Administration on Aging at <http://www.aoa.gov> you can access related links including

- Population estimates by age and states
- Updates on Older Americans Act
- Fact Sheets
- Legal hotlines for older Americans
- Aging issues for women
- Updates on federal policies and laws
- Other sites of similar interest

American Society on Aging at <http://www.asaging.org>

Caregiver Media Group provides a website (<http://www.caregiver.com>) focused on meeting the needs of those involved in eldercare. There is information for the caregivers to find out information on health, law, as well as their own well-being. Links and access to a newsletter are available.

The Department of Personnel homepage at <http://www.wa.gov/dop> includes programs and services and the Merit System Rules for referencing many of the options mentioned in this report. Authorized state personnel can also access the Data Warehouse which provides employee data by agency and statewide. The Department of Personnel Data Warehouse <http://dop16wbp/dw97/dwindex.htm> (turnover by agency and other employees).

The Department of Retirement Systems at <http://www.wa.gov/drs> has information on programs and services for members, retirees, and employers. The DRS website also includes a retirement benefit calculator for PERS 2 members.

Employment Law Resource Center contains a wide variety of information on human resource issues, including legal aspects of FMLA, and discrimination. The center can be accessed at <http://www.ahipubs.com>.

Employment Security at <http://www.wa.gov/esd> has a wide range of labor market information and produces regular trends and reports on employment issues. It also has an on-line database at <http://www.wilma.org>.

* When going back to review sources prior to publication of this report, we found some instances where websites had changed and the original information was no longer available. The information listed in this section is accurate at the time this report is being published, but may change in the future.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at <http://www.eeoc.gov> provides online access to the full text of laws enforced by the EEOC, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. While at the EEOC's site, review their section pertaining to employer responsibilities under the ADA as well as their section entitled "Enforcement and Litigation".

The Office of Financial Management at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov> has statewide population data and publishes periodic research on demographic and social trends and issues. Much of that information is now online.

The Gerontological Society of America lists formal and informal interest groups formed around a topic or issue. Contact names and information are provided for each interest. <http://www.geron.org/interest.html>

Human Research Development Canada at <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca> provides links to research papers along the main themes of Human Resources Development including:

- The Changing Nature of Work
- Skills Requirements in the Knowledge-based Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Skill Shortages in Canada

Institute for Human Development, Life Course and Aging: Online Publications (Canada) at <http://utcat.library.utoronto.ca/www/aging/deptpubs.html> brings access to literature reviews.

The National Council on Aging at <http://www.ncoa.org>.

The Seniors Coalition offers links to information such as Medicare, social security, and restoring work incentives for older Americans. <http://www.senior.org/issues/>

Senior Employment Program provides information about employment and research into employment issues for mature workers. Links to issues of mature workers. <http://www.sremploy.org/olderw.html>

Winning Associates contains articles pertaining to many human resources issues and topics, including age discrimination. <http://www.ewin.com>

Women and the Aging Workforce (Canada) provides links to other information such as demographics, family care, labor force participation, poverty in old age, etc. http://www.library.utoronto.ca/www/aging/wp2_toc.html

Workforce On-line (formerly Personnel Journal) A simple free registration process allows you to access the research center and conduct global chats with other human resource professionals. <http://www.workforceonline.com>.

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Rappaport, Anna M.; Carol A. Bogosina; Carol A. Klann. "Population trends and the labor force in the years ahead" Benefits Quarterly; Brookfield; Fourth Quarter 1998

Stalnaker; C. Keith. "Safety of older workers in the 21st century" Professional Safety; Park Ridge; June 1998

State of Washington, "1999 Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington" prepared by the Office of Financial Management and Employment Security Department, 1999

State of Washington, "Plan II Retirement Age Report; Joint Committee on Pension Policy" prepared by the Office of the State Actuary, 1992

Wagner, Donna L., "In the Eye of the Employer: Perceptions about Older Workers". Innovations in Aging, Issue 1 (1998) 21-22.

Watson Wyatt Worldwide. Phased Retirement – Reshaping the End of Work. 1999.

Yamamoto; Dale. "Retiree health care benefits: "Strategies for a changing workforce". Benefits Quarterly; Brookfield; Fourth Quarter 1998

Organizations

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). 601 E Street NW, Washington D.C. 20049.

Washington State Dept. of Social and Health Services, Aging and Adult Services Administration - State Unit on Aging. 600 Woodland Square Loop SE, P.O. Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600. Phone: (360) 493-2577; Fax (360) 438-8633.

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging. 1511 Third Avenue, Suite 914, Seattle, Washington 98101-1626. Phone: Seattle (206) 624-1221; Washington D.C. (202) 828-0026; Fax: (206) 624-1023.

Senior Environmental Employment Program. 401 M Street SW, Washington D.C. 20460. Phone (202) 260-2573 Fax: (202) 260-0450.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA). 409 Third Street SW, Washington D.C. 20024. Phone: (202) 479-1200 Fax: (202) 479-0735. <http://www.ncoa.org>

Washington State Department of Retirement Systems. Public Employees' Retirement System, PO Box 48380 Olympia, Washington 98504-8380. Phone: (360) 709-4700; 1-800-547-6657. <http://www.wa.gov/drs>

Department of Personnel. PO Box 47500, Olympia, Washington 98504-7500. Phone: (360) 664-1960

Employment Security Department. PO Box 9046, Olympia, Washington 98507-9046. Phone: (360) 902-9500

Office of Financial Management. PO Box 43113, Olympia, Washington 98504-3113. Phone: (360) 902-0555

Appendices

Appendix A: Department of Health Succession Planning

The Office of Human Relations (OHR) within the Department of Health (DOH) calculated that by 2004, 25% of the agency will be eligible for retirement. The agency realized that it would have to deal with many issues beyond sick and vacation leave cashouts. DOH discovered that it had to be ready to replace a high number of vacancies in vital positions. In an effort to support the agency, OHR developed a succession planning guide. The guide offered suggestions and gave examples, but also left much up to individual divisions. This is because they felt that the specific strategy and content of a succession plan must revolve around the specific needs of the group.

The Department of Health presented its program in 11 steps:

1. Identify key (critical) positions.
2. Identify the skills, knowledge, abilities, characteristics, and other competencies needed for success in the key positions.
3. Identify anticipated vacancies in these key positions.
4. Identify existing employees who could potentially fill these positions.
5. Identify the difference between the needed skills for a position and level of readiness of the potential replacement employees to fill that position.
6. Establish individualized development plans to heighten the level of readiness of the employees.
7. Track development plans and the progress of the employees toward readiness to fill the vital positions.
8. Establish ways to modify the succession plans as circumstances change.
9. Link the succession plan to the agency's overall strategic plan.
10. Share the plan with any union that might be involved.
11. Include a communication plan that allows employee feedback and open dialogue

Appendix B: Department of Social and Health Services Succession Plan Summary

In 1994, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) developed its Human Resource Development Plan in response to the Governor's 1990 call for agencies to create a human resource program. This plan identified succession planning as one of DSHS's main goals for the future. A committee, led by members of the DSHS Office of Professional Development, investigated the problems and opportunities involved in implementing a succession plan in the agency. One of the final recommendations of the committee was for a guide to succession planning to be developed to aid DSHS's divisions in this process. This project began in 1992, and the end result was the document *Succession Planning: A Practical Guide to Planning and Conducting Succession Planning*.

Their succession plan consisted of two, multi-step phases:

Phase 1: Identify key functions

- Make the decision to proceed as an agency
- Develop a criteria for determining key functions agency wide
- Develop a criteria for determining key functions at the office level
- Educate employees about succession planning
- Identify key functions for the office and the agency
- The end result of this phase should be an accurate list of key functions

Phase 2: Develop a talent pool

- Supervisors identify the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to perform the key functions in their unit
- Supervisors and staff develop a plan to qualify employees to perform key functions
- Supervisors monitor the progress of the development and provide mentoring to employees

The end result should be a pool of qualified candidates that will ensure key functions are fulfilled in the future.

Preparation

- Gain a thorough understanding of agency workforce profiles, turnover patterns, and projected retirements
- Determine how to proceed organizationally (e.g. by division, by occupation)
- Determine who to involve in the plan development process
- Identify key occupations or positions likely to experience turnover
- Identify any retention or workforce environment issues that need attention
- Identify key or critical occupations or positions for carrying out agency mission (criteria may need to be developed)
- Identify competency profiles for these occupations or positions
- Identify potential changes in needs over the next five years
- Ensure link with strategic objectives

Talent Pool Development

Internal Resources

- Identify existing employees who could potentially replace those leaving (criteria may need to be developed)
- Assess competencies of these employees (tools may need to be developed)
- Identify the gaps between competencies needed and the level of readiness of the potential replacement employees
- Establish development plans to heighten the level of readiness of the employees. (The plans may be for groups of employees, for individuals, or a combination. Developmental activities may be readily available or may need to be developed)
- Track development plans and the progress of employees, individually and collectively, toward readiness to fill the vital positions

External Resources

- Identify outside sources for areas where external hiring is the norm, or where internal applicant pools will not be sufficient
- Identify potential recruitment problems

Communication

- Develop a communication plan to inform employees of anticipated turnover and potential developmental opportunities
- Share the plan with appropriate labor organizations and any other interested parties
- Develop means of maintaining dialogue and feedback

Plan Implementation

- Set up an implementation schedule
- Set up a process for evaluating plan implementation
- Develop strategies for resolving problem areas identified in preparation stage
- Establish ways to modify the succession plans as circumstances change or new problem areas occur

Appendix C: Department of Ecology Senior Investment Project

[Note: The following information was provided by the Department of Ecology prior to September 1999.]

Washington Conservation Corps
Salmon Recovery Initiative
Additional Detail: Senior Involvement

The state of Washington has recently committed to a vigorous salmon recovery effort. Many state and local government agencies, along with non-profit groups, are already developing and implementing salmon restoration projects. Unfortunately, due to inadequate resources (funding, time, and available workforce), critical new projects remain to be developed and implemented. Our proposed Salmon Recovery Initiative will provide the critical labor force needed by organizations to help accomplish the myriad of tasks necessary to complete projects that will strengthen our wild salmon populations. To that end, we also recognize the tremendous resource that exists in our senior population. We believe that seniors can fill vital roles and provide significant assistance with a variety of efforts as part of salmon recovery.

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office recently issued the Draft Statewide Strategy to Salmon Recovery which states the goal is to "Restore salmon, steelhead, and trout populations to healthy harvestable levels." The strategy specifically identifies habitat as the key element to salmon recovery and breaks it down further into seven strategic focuses. The efforts of our Salmon Recovery Initiative will be targeted towards four of the seven focus areas including: agricultural impacts, water quality, fish passage barriers, and adequate stream flows.

The selection of our individual restoration projects has always been locally driven by our project partners which ensures that they are of the highest priority. We feel strongly that this is an important component in creating project ownership and strengthening communities, therefore we will continue to use this mode of operation for the Salmon Recovery Initiative. Additionally, the Washington State Legislature recently passed the Salmon Recovery Act which establishes a process in which local citizen committees are established as "Lead Entities". Their task is to work with various technical assistance to develop prioritized project lists. AmeriCorps, through the Salmon Recovery Initiative, will ultimately be one of the major sources for implementation of these projects.

As part of the Initiative, we are going to partner with a variety of entities that will have seniors working both individually and in teams to get things done in support of salmon recovery. There is a huge effort necessary to prepare and implement restoration projects that our seniors will be working on. Some examples of that work include: measuring stream dimensions/characteristics and riparian buffer areas, analyzing stream bank failures or lack of habitat, working with land owners to gain access to riparian areas, developing restoration plans, materials lists, obtaining necessary permits, and help to coordinate and train volunteers. There are also a number of post-project tasks that will be completed by our seniors such as data reporting which could include number, characterization, specific locations (GPS/GIS mapping), and on going monitoring of completed projects.

Some of our current and/or past partner organizations have utilized seniors to complete a variety of these types of tasks which we can learn from. This is also an area where the Unified State Plan can be utilized. We believe that we can benefit greatly by reaching out collaboratively to learn lessons from other AmeriCorps programs. We know there are model programs out there,

specifically in the priority area of education, that have successfully integrated seniors into their service. We will use these program examples to learn from their mistakes and try to capitalize on their success by integrating appropriate aspects.

We are going to require organizations that are asking to partner with us in our Salmon Recovery Initiative to include in their proposals a specific plan describing how they will integrate seniors into their projects and how they will integrate them with the other Members.

To support their efforts, we are proposing to work with one or more Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) offices to help establish a pool of seniors to assist the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) and our partner organizations. Seniors will play a major role in tasks such as recruitment, helping with volunteer training and coordination, and project follow up. It is our intent to connect our partners with their local RSVP offices to help them develop senior involvement. We believe that helping them make this connection will lead to an ongoing sustainable relationship and overall community strengthening.

We have had a series of initial meetings with the immediate past president of the Washington State RSVP Directors Association to explore this idea and to identify RSVP offices that would be the best to do pilot partnerships. We intend to have our plans and partners finalized by September 1, 1999. Over the next few months we will continue to work with RSVP offices and other cross stream and local senior organizations to develop new and better ways to incorporate the resources that exist within our senior population. Again, the WCC embraces the concept of "ownership of ideas", and realizes that some of the best ideas for senior involvement will come from the senior population itself.

We also recognize the value, worthiness, and potential desire of seniors to be involved with some of the more labor intensive aspects of restoration projects. Efforts such as plantings and in-stream habitat structures are very fulfilling endeavors which should, as much as possible, be shared with our senior partners. Our initial vision in this arena is two fold. First, we will tap into the vast array of environmental experience that exists within the senior population. We will be exploring and pursuing all of the options that may be available to us through the Senior Environmental Corps (SEC). The status of the SEC in our state is in question as there is no funding currently allocated for the program. Regardless, we will use the model established by the SEC which places seniors with specific skills on-site to mentor teams of Members that are working on specific types of projects. This may also be an opportunity to tap into the alumni of the original Civilian Conservation Corps. Even if they don't have specific environmental skills to lend, they can mentor, share, and potentially lead Members in a reflection process on their overall AmeriCorps experience. The second way we envision involving seniors in the field work is through larger events. An obvious example of this would be a large planting project. This lends itself nicely because it can accommodate nearly all levels of physical ability, i.e., actual planting, to less strenuous support functions.

One of the more important elements, and potentially one of the best fits for senior involvement in this effort, is in the arena of education. An educated public is one of the keys to making Washington's salmon recovery goals a reality. Seniors will be incredibly valuable in raising awareness about the overall salmon recovery effort in Washington and about specific efforts taking place in local areas.

The variety of ways that seniors will help educate people about salmon recovery issues and environmental education in general are limitless. Examples will include educating citizens about

specific project elements such as the purpose/value of in-stream structures or riparian zone enhancements, and they will provide a broader education on salmon ecology and watersheds in general.

Seniors will work individually and in teams to develop programs that will be provided to individuals or groups of volunteers, school groups, service organizations, local action groups such as stream teams, local watershed planning groups, and general community organizations. This is a prime example of where seniors, and organizations that work with seniors, may have great ideas.

One of the specific proposals that we want to initiate is to have a team of seniors working in conjunction with our Public Schools Initiative. The intent of the Initiative is to develop partnerships that actively involve a school's entire community, especially students and teachers, in the construction and/or enhancement of naturalized outdoor learning facilities on or near school property. The projects are designed to give schools a tool to help provide their students with frequent, hands-on, experiential learning about salmon and fisheries related issues and about the environment in general, while providing our members with an enriching and meaningful service experience.

We see multiple opportunities for seniors to be involved with these school projects. They can easily be integrated to work side by side with the students, teachers, and WCC/AmeriCorps Members on all aspects of planning the projects. In addition, seniors will work with the schools, both pre-project and during the project, to provide classroom lessons related to the various phases of the work as well as general lessons about watersheds and salmon ecology. Seniors will also work with teachers (post project) to train and coach them on ways to utilize their new environmental education facilities. This is certainly a model that can be repeated and duplicated year after year, creating a valuable, sustainable resource to the schools.

Member development and training has always been an important element of our program and we are committed to extending that to our senior partners. We will work with our partner organizations to ensure that the seniors involved with our Initiative are adequately trained and supervised. We will be using our existing program model as the foundation for that training and supervision, recognizing that some modifications will be needed. We will also work with our partner organizations to ensure that they are appropriately recognized for their efforts.

To date, our best estimate as to the number of seniors that will be involved is 50. This estimate is based on an average of two seniors per placement site and an additional five to ten seniors working as a team. A more realistic target should be available by September 1st [1999] when our plans are more finalized. In addition, we estimate that our Salmon Recovery Initiative projects will generate an estimated 4,000 volunteers who will certainly include a number of seniors.

Accomplishing the goal of salmon recovery will require a cooperative and concentrated effort to reverse the problems that plague salmon and the integrity of their habitat. We believe that by utilizing the intergenerational resources of our state's population, our Salmon Recovery Initiative will ultimately be a vital element in the overall success of the Recovery effort.

Appendix D: Contacts for Survey of Public Jurisdictions

ARIZONA	Don Rohan	(602) 240-2022
CALIFORNIA	Frank Marr	(916) 324-0504
COLORADO	Sue Huang	(303) 866-2455
IDAHO	Dennis Moberly	(208) 334-3346
ILLINOIS	Phil Hinds	(217) 782-7976
KING COUNTY	Doris Hill	(206) 684-1556
MICHIGAN	Linda Coe	(517) 335-0318
MINNESOTA	Eric Swensson	(612) 282-2426
MONTANA	Linda Kushane	(406) 444-3193
NEVADA	Linda Perwein	(702) 687-4200
NEW YORK	Vince Perfetto	(518) 457-9392
OREGON	Linda Vogue	(503) 378-5582
UTAH	Norma Middleton	(801) 538-3070
WISCONSIN	Dana Denny	(608) 267-0342